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Disney

ESSAY

ON THE

IMMORTALITY

AND

PROPHANEITY

OF THE CASE OF OVID

AND HIS

POETRY

IN THE

REMARKS

ON THE

POETRY

OF OVID

AND HIS

A S E C O N D
E S S A Y
U P O N T H E
E X E C U T I O N *of the* L A W S
A G A I N S T
I M M O R A L I T Y
A N D
P R O P H A N E N E S S :

Wherein the C A S E of Giving
Informations to the M A G I S T R A T E is
Considered, and O B J E C T I O N S
against it Answered.

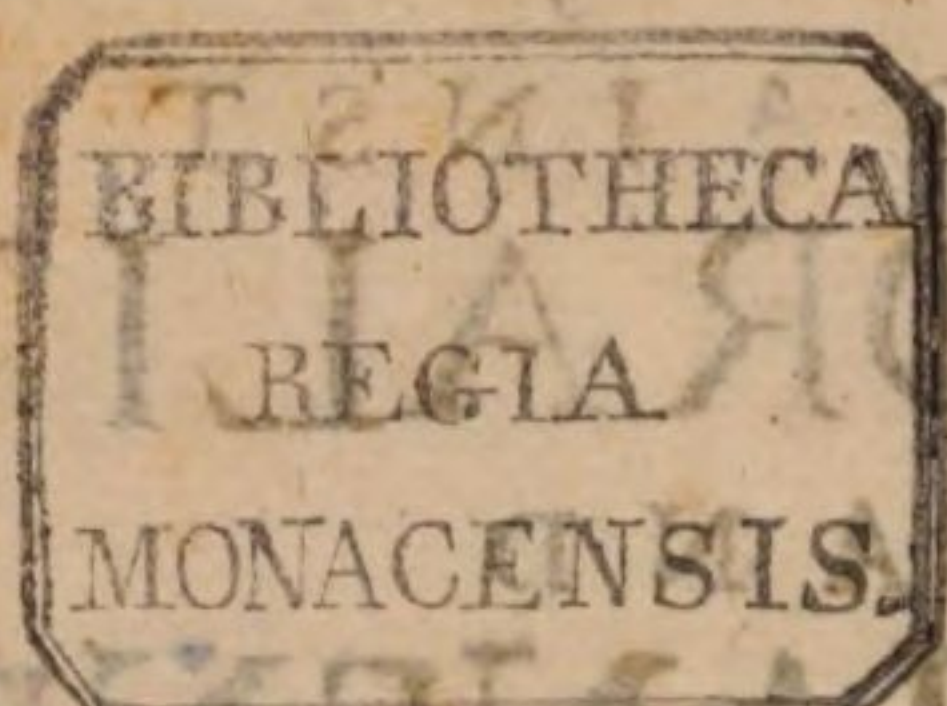
By J O H N D I S N E Y, Esq;

With a P R E F A C E, Addressed to
Grand Juries, Constables, and Church-
Wardens.

I Kings xviii. 17, 18. *And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy Father's House, in that they have forsaken the Commandments of the Lord.*
Prov. xxviii. 4. *They that forsake the Law, praise the Wicked: but such as keep the Law, contend with them.*

L O N D O N,
Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing in Bartholomew-
Close near West-Smithfield, 1710.

A SECOND
ESSAY
UPON THE
EXECUTION OF THE LAWS



WHEREIN THE CASE OF GIVING
INFORMATION TO THE MAGISTRATE IS
CONSIDERED, AND OBJECTIONS
AGAINST IT ANSWERED.

By JOHN DISNEY, Esq.
With a PREFACE, Addressed to
Grand Jurors, Constables, and Church-
Wardens.

1 Kings xxviii. 17, 18. And it came to pass when Ahab
saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he
that troublest Israel? And he answered, I have not
troubled Israel; but thou and thy Father's House, in
that they have forsaken the Commandments of the Lord.
Prov. xxviii. 4. They that forsake the Law, pervert the
Word: but such as keep the Law, contend with them.

L O N D O N
Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing in Bartholomew-
Close near West-Smithfield, 1710.

THE PREFACE,

*Address'd to all Grand-
Juries, Constables, and
Church-Wardens.*

GENTLEMEN,

WHosoever with any Regard to
Virtue and Religion, considers
the general Practice of the World,
will own it to be high Time that
the Prophaneness, Lewdness, and
Debaucheries of Men should be some
way or other put a Stop to and sup-
pressed. It will perhaps be readily
granted me, by sober and well dis-
posed Persons at least, that the spiri-
tual and civil Power, the Judges of
*Assize, Ecclesiastical Courts, and Justices
of the Peace*, should take effectual Care to
punish such Excesses. But notwith-
standing these good Words, Men

generally except themselves, and those of their own Rank and Circumstances, from contributing any thing to the Matter; and tho' they grant the Suppression of Vice to be a *Duty*, understand no more by it, than that 'tis every Body's Duty *but their own*. Private Persons blame the *Magistrates* for *not Punishing*; Magistrates throw it back upon *them*, and upon *you*, for *not Informing*: And thus by shifting the Obligation, nothing is done to Purpose; we fire at Wickedness as with *Powder* only, a faint Sigh, and an empty Wish or two, (which, I can assure you, will do no Execution,) while *all Hands* should be engaged against it, and plying it on every Side with *Cannon-Ball* and *Chain-Shot*. Whatever becomes of the Obligation upon *private Persons* to inform, (tho' I have no Reason at all to distrust my Arguments in that Point,) it may be *certainly* fastened upon *you*. They indeed are obliged in Point of Conscience, in Point of Duty to God, of Reverence to Religion, and of Charity to their Neighbours, to inform against Vice, that it may be punished and suppressed; but *YOU*, *over and above* these common Obligations, wherein,

as

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as *Christians*, you are equally concerned with *them*, have also the OATH of God upon you, and are SWORN INFORMERS by LAW; others *may* and *ought*, you *must* give Notice of Offences in order to their due Correction; your Country entrusts you with this very Service.

You, Gentlemen of *Grand-Juries*, may be pleased to consider, that you take a solemn Oath, in the Face of the Court, that you will “DILIGENTLY INQUIRE, and true PRESENTMENT make of ALL such Articles, Matters and Things as shall be GIVEN YOU IN CHARGE; as also, that you will (not only present no Person for Envy, Hatred or Malice, but) not leave any UNPRESENTED for Fear, Favour, or Affection. Now, are not the Laws against Immorality and Prophaneness GIVEN YOU IN CHARGE, both at Assizes and Sessions, as well as those against Felony, Treason, Riots, Routs, unlawful Assemblies, Breach of the Peace, &c? Are not Presentment and Indictment one Method expressly appointed by the Statute for the Punishment of * Drunkenness and Tippling? Are not Houses of || Bawdry and

* 4 Jac. 1. c.
5. §. 5.
|| Co. Inst. III.
c. 98.

†W.N's Office and † Gaming, and other disorderly
of Just of a P. public Houses, punishable in the
p. 300. same Courts, and consequently pre-

* 1 Eliz. c. 2. very same in Cases of obstinate * ab-
§. 17. 23 Eliz. senting from Church? Is not Her Ma-
c. 1. §. 9. jesty's PROCLAMATION for the

*Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and
for the preventing and punishing of Vice,
Prophaneness and Immorality, always
read before you as soon as you are
Sworn? And why particularly at
that Time, when you have just taken
your Oath, if it be not designed as a
Direction and Command to you of
the Grand-Jury, to inquire into, and
present Offences against Religion and
good Manners? Does not the Judge
of Assize, or Chairman of the Bench,
in the Charge that is immediately gi-
ven after the reading of that Procla-
mation, either recite to you the par-
ticular Laws against such Offences, and
urge you to the due Prosecution of such
Offenders, or at least refer you to the Pro-
clamation for that Part of what they
should say to you, and thereby incorpo-
rate the Proclamation with the Charge
they give you? 'Tis plain from all
this, that you are bound upon your
Oaths, to present all Instances of Vice
and*

and *Immorality* (as well as other Crimes) that fall within your Knowledge, because they are expressly GIVEN YOU IN CHARGE. And this (as in other Cases) you are to do, not only when *Evidence* is offered before you by *the Information of others*, but of all such Offences and Offenders within your County or Division, as you, or any of you, are able of your OWN PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE to Present; which you Swear to do *impartially*, without FEAR or FAVOUR, or any other vicious Principle obstructing. Excuse me, Gentlemen, what I have said is rather to put you in Mind of your Duty, than to instruct you in it: And give me leave to add but one Observation more, which may be of Use to you, (especially to Grand-Juries empanelled to serve at Quarter-Sessions of the Peace;) that by the Statute 3 Hen. 7. 3 Hen. 7. c. 1. if a Grand-Jury conceal any thing §. 4, 5. which they ought to Present, the Justices may within a Year impanel another Jury to enquire of such Concealment, and upon Conviction, fine them at Discretion of the Court: So earnestly the Laws insist upon your Care and Faithfulness in presenting.

I shall next address my self to you that are *Constables*: And to you I must needs say, that if you know your Duty, 'tis no Thanks to us that are Justices; for the Oath we usually give you is so *short*, and in such *general* Terms, that it leaves with you no Manner of Instruction in the Particulars of the Office to which you are sworn, and does not therefore make so great an Impression, as I hope it would otherwise do, upon your Consciences. But the Oath which *ought* to be given you, recites your Duty (so far as concerns Offences against Morality and Religion) in these Words:

Dalton's *Just.*
of P. c. 174.
Meriton's
Guide to Con-
stables, &c. c.
1.

“ --- You shall do your best En-
“ deavour that --- Rogues, Vaga-
“ bonds and Night-walkers be appre-
“ hended; --- and that the Statutes
“ made for the Punishment of Rogues,
“ Vagabonds, and such other idle
“ Persons coming within your Bounds
“ or Limits, be duly put in Execu-
“ tion. ---- You shall have a WATCH-
“ FUL EYE to such as shall main-
“ tain or keep any common House
“ or Place where any *unlawful Game*
“ is or shall be used: As also to such
“ as shall *frequent* or use such Places, or
“ shall

“ shall *use* or *exercise* any unlawful
 “ Games there or elsewhere. At your
 “ Assizes, Session of the Peace, or
 “ Leet, you shall present ALL and
 “ EVERY the Offences contrary to
 “ the Statutes made to restrain *the*
 “ *inordinate haunting* and TIPPLING
 “ *in Inns, Ale-houses, and other Victual-*
 “ *ling-Houses,* and for repressing of
 “ DRUNKENNESS. ---- You shall
 “ once in the Year, during your Of-
 “ fice, present at the Quarter-Session
 “ all *Popish Recusants*, their Children,
 “ above the Age of Nine Years, and
 “ their Servants, (*viz.* their month-
 “ ly ABSENCE FROM CHURCH.)
 “ ---- You shall well and duly exe-
 “ cute all PRECEPTS and WAR-
 “ RANTS to you directed from the
 “ Justices of the Peace of this Coun-
 “ ty [or Division] or higher Officers.
 “ ---- And you shall well and duly,
 “ according to your Knowledge,
 “ Power and Ability, do and execute
 “ ALL OTHER things belonging
 “ to the Office of a *Constable*, so long
 “ as you shall continue therein.

The Substance of this last Clause
 is usually all the Oath which those
 that administer it think fit to give
 you: But to satisfy you by what

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Authority the rest of this Form above recited is imposed upon you; as also a little to explain the several Parts of your Charge, and the Extent of your Power for the Suppression of Vice, which perhaps you may not thoroughly be acquainted with; be pleased to take Notice of the following Particulars.

It would be tedious to enlarge upon the Laws against *Vagrants*; you are instructed in them at every Session, and are well enough acquainted with the common Road of dealing with such Persons; I wish you were as careful to put those Laws in Execution, that they might be whipp'd and sent home, as the Statutes direct: For *Idleness* is without Dispute a very great Immorality, and the Fountain of most other Vices. But I would observe to

* 39. Eliz. c. 4.
§. 5.

|| 1 Jac. 1. c.

7. §. 7. 11 &

12 W. 3. c.

18. §. 4.

† Continued

by Annæ Sess.

2. c. 13. for 3.

Years longer, &

by 5 Annæ for

7 Years longer.

you (1.) That *your Oath* obliges you to this Care. (2.) That this Part of your Oath is grounded upon Laws that lay upon you a Penalty of * Ten or || Twenty Shillings, † if you neglect it. (3.) That *common Players* of Entertainments, or *Actors of Plays*, are expressly by Name within the Statute, to be taken up for Vagabonds, and punished accordingly: For tho' the

Stat.

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Stat. 39 Eliz. *excepts* such Companies 39 Eliz. c. 4.
of Players as belong to any Peer of §. 2.
the Kingdom, and have a Licence
under his Hand and Seal; yet a la-
ter Statute in the Reign of King James
I. has taken away that Protection
from them, by declaring and enact-
ing, *That from thenceforth no Authority* 1 Jac. 1. c. 7.
to be given or made by any Baron of this §. 1.

*Realm, or any other honourable Perso-
nage of greater Degree, shall be avail-
able to free or discharge them from
the Pains and Punishments of that
former Statute. By which 'tis plain,
whatever their Pretences be, those
strolling Players are to be look'd upon
as VAGRANTS, and ought to be
apprehended by the Constable, and
punished by the Magistrate as such.
Nor are they without Precedents in
several Corporations and larger Towns,
where, by Virtue of the said Statutes,
such Players have been driven away.
You that live in Country-Villages are
not so much concerned in this Obser-
vation, as those that are Constables in
great Towns, where this vile Brood of
Players usually make their Stages, and
nest themselves (for some Weeks in a
Place) to propagate Prophaneness
and Debauchery, under the Colour
of*

of Diversion: But those that carry your Authority in those Parishes where they fix, are bound, I must tell you, by their Oaths, to seize upon, correct, and send them packing, as a Gang of Vagrants and Villains, the most mischeivous to Religion and good Manners of any that can infest a Country.

The next Part of your Oath concerns the Suppression of *Gaming*; a Vice by which so many Thousand Families have been ruined, (both by the *Idleness* and the *Expence* that attends it,) that you will do very great Service to your Neighbourhood and the whole Nation, by keeping (as your Oath obliges you) a WATCHFUL EYE upon such Houses as *maintain*, and such Persons as *exercise* unlawful or excessive Gaming. The Statute directs you, *weekly*, or at least *monthly*, (if the Case so require) to *search* within your Liberties all Houses or Places suspected of this Offence, and upon Discovery to bring them to Punishment; for Neglect of which you forfeit *Forty Shillings*. Upon this Article I would observe, (1.) That there seems to be some Allowance in the Law for Artificers, Husbandmen, Apprentices,

33 Hen. 8. c.
9. §. 15.

§. 16.

prentices, Labourers, and Servants, to play in *Christmas*, but at no other Time of the Year. (2.) That *all* Sports and Pastimes whatsoever are made unlawful upon the *Lord's-Day*, to Persons *out* of their own Parishes, by the Statute of King *Charles I.* and to every *1 Car. 1. c. 1.* Body, without Exception (whether *in* or *out* of his own Parish,) by a later Statute of King *Charles II.* which E- *29 Car. 2. c.* naëts, " That all and every Person *7. §. 1.* " and Persons whatsoever shall on " every *Lord's-Day* apply themselves " to the Observation of the same, by " exercising themselves thereon in the " Duties of Piety and true Religion " *publicly* and *privately*. This Clause having cut out other Work for the *Lord's-Day* (even for those Parts of it that are *not* employed *at Church*) must be presum'd to allow no Room for any Sports or Pastimes whatsoever. (3.) All Sports being unlawful upon that Day, and the Constable being bound to keep a watchful Eye upon the Places where, and Persons by whom, unlawful Games are practis'd; I conclude from thence, that he ought weekly (as the Statute directs) *to search* his Parish, or at least, *to keep*

a watchful Eye upon it (as his Oath enjoins him,) every Lord's-Day, either to prevent or to discover, and bring to Punishment such as shall be guilty of *prophaning* that Day by any *Sports* or *Pastimes*.

The next Part of your Oath is, That at the Assizes, Session, or Leet, you shall present *all* and *every* the Offences of *Tippling* and *Drunkenness* that shall come to your Knowledge. And this is no more than the express Direction of the Law, by which it is enacted,

4 Jac. 1. c. 5. " That all Constables, Church-War-
 §. 7. 21 Jac. " dens, Headboroughs, Tythingmen,
 1. c. 7. §. 5. " &c. shall, in their several OATHS,
 " incident to their several Offices, be
 " charged to PRESENT these Of-
 " fences; that is, of *Drunkenness*, *Tip-
 pling*, and Houses *permitting Tippling*,
 against which the Statutes cited in the
 Margent, and that other (1 Jac. 1. c.
 9.) referred to in them, were made.
 Would Constables faithfully do this,
 to which the Laws of the Kingdom,
 and the Oath they take, oblige them,
 they would quickly, by the Blessing
 of God, effect a happy Reformation
 in their Parishes.

The next Obligation upon you is,
 That you shall once in the Year pre-
 sent

sent all Popish Recusants, their *monthly Absence from Church*. This also is by a particular Act of Parliament, which lays a Penalty of Twenty Shillings upon you if you neglect, and assigns a Reward of Forty Shillings to you (to be levied by a Justice's Warrant upon the Recusant's Goods and Estate) if you do your Duty in presenting. I will only observe upon this Statute, that tho' it seems to have been made only against POPISH Recusants, yet we have Authority of Parliament on our Side, for extending it to ALL Persons (*Protestants* as well as Papists) that do not duly come to Church, and attend the public Service of God there, without reasonable Excuse: As appears by the *Exception* from it in Favour of Protestant *Dissenters* in the Stat. 1 *W. and M. for exempting them from the Penalties of certain Laws*; where amongst others this particular Statute (3 *Jac. 1. c. 4.*) is recited, but to very little Purpose sure, if it never affected any but the Roman Catholics; as also by Section 16. §. 16. of that same Act, 1 *W. and M. by which all Laws for frequenting divine Service* are confirmed, and ordered to be

3 *Jac. 1. c. 4.*
§. 4, 5, 6.

1 *W. & M.*
Sess. 1. c. 18.
§. 2.

be put in Execution against **A L L** **PERSONS** offending, except Protestant Dissenters duly qualified. And therefore by the Statute upon which your Oath is grounded, you are obliged once a Year to present in Session *all those* within your Parishes, who (not being Dissenters frequenting some other public Worship tolerated by Law) come not once in a Month at least to Church; for tho' they may call themselves *Protestants*, and Members of the *Church of England*, yet thus absenting from the public Services of Religion amongst us, they are in Construction of Law looked upon as *Popish Recusants*, and are to share both in their Name and Punishment.

Another thing to which your Oath expressly binds you is, Well and duly to execute **ALL PRECEPTS** and **WARRANTS** to you directed from the Justices of Peace or higher Officers. This is so well known, that no Constable in *England* will pretend to be ignorant of it; and I believe 'tis the *only* Part of their Office that many of them in Country-Villages know any thing of: Yet even this (in some Cases) is not so carefully minded as it ought

ought to be. When we send out Warrants to levy upon an Offender for *Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness, Profanation of the Lord's-Day, &c.* I cannot but observe how hardly we are obeyed, how unwillingly the Constable does his Office, how long before he sets about it, how many Tricks and Evasions he makes Use of to favour the Criminal, and to render his Punishment of as little Use to his Reformation as is possible. Gentlemen, what can be the Meaning of all this? Are you not sworn to execute *these* Warrants as well as any other? And are you not sworn to execute them DULY too, without any Tricks, or needless Delays, and according to the strict and literal Tenor of your Precept? Your Precept tells you, you shall *demand* such a Sum as the Penalty by Law amounts to; and if the Offender will not pay, you are to *levy it by Distress and Sale of his Goods*; and if NO Distress CAN be taken, (if he really have nothing to distrain upon) you are *then* to set him in the Stocks for so long as the Warrant appoints: But if it be made appear that the Offender *had* Goods within your

your Liberty, that you might have distrained upon, and would not, he may if he pleases (for ought I know) have his Action against you *of false Imprisonment*; for your Warrant gave you no Authority *in that Case* to set him in the Stocks, but to levy upon his Goods. However, you are punishable for neglecting your Warrant; for such a Setting in the Stocks, when you might have distrained, is, I can assure you, *no Execution* of your Precept: Beside that in such a Case you rob the Poor, who have a Right to the Money payable for the Offence, and which they would have recovered if you had done your Duty in *distraining*. I say therefore, if the Offender have any thing that you *can* *distrain*, it is neither in *his* Choice nor in *your's* whether he shall be *set in the Stocks or pay*; your Warrant is to be your Direction, and that tells you, you must first do your utmost *to levy upon his Goods*. Another wicked Artifice which I have known to be used by some Officers to render the Punishment of little or no Effect, is, after Payment to *return the Money* again to the Offender, or at least a
Part

Part of it. Now what is this, but *robbing the Poor*, to whom the Law has given the Penalty, and every Farthing of it? What is it, but acting directly contrary to your Warrant, which, according to Law, directs, That it shall be so disposed of *to the Poor*? What is it, but a *lessening* the Offender's Punishment? which you have no Authority to do; for the Law has not made you *Judges* in the Case, but only ministerial Officers to execute the Sentence: And if you return him *all* his Money, it is *not punishing him at all*. If for giving the Money back again, you plead, that *the Offender himself* is poor, yet because such a Management would certainly not answer the End of the Law, which is, to punish him by the Payment of so much Money, neither more nor less, for such an Offence, you cannot justify your Disobedience to the Law by your illegal & impertinent Charity to the Offender: He is not to have a Farthing of it *himself*, be he never so poor; but *other Poor* are to have it. Consider, Gentlemen, how you will answer it at the Day of Judgment, if when good Laws are
put

put in Execution by the Magistrate for the Suppression of Vice and Prophaneness, *you* do your utmost to discourage and perplex that Execution of them which is entrusted upon your OATHS with *you*, and thereby prevent as much as in you lies the Effect of those Laws, and the Reformation of Offenders, disappoint the Wishes and Endeavours of all good Men, and contribute to support and strengthen Vice, by defeating the Punishment it ought to undergo. Consider too, what you have to expect in *this* World, from *the Law*, if you be negligent. You may be Indicted at the Assize or Quarter-Session for *any Neglect* in your Office, and fined, upon Conviction, as for a Misdemeanour: But beside this, I told you before, the Statute has laid a Penalty of Twenty Shillings upon you, if you do not once a Year present all *monthly Absenters from Church*; and I now tell you further, that if you neglect to execute your Warrant upon any Person for the Offence of *Drunkenness*, if you either do not punish, or not duly *levy* the Penalty *where Distress may be had*, you forfeit *Ten Shillings*, which the Justice may levy upon you for the Poor.

And

And if in the Case of *Ale-Houses* *suf-* 1 Jac. 1. c. 2
§. 4.
fering Tippling, you either neglect to
 levy according to your Warrant, or
 neglect to certifie to the Justice with-
 in Twenty Days that no Distress can
 be had, you forfeit *Forty Shillings*. Af-
 ter these Representations, I must add,
 that you are not only bound to exe-
 cute such *particular* Warrants as come
 to levy Penalties; but also where the
 Care of the Magistrates goes so far, as
 to deliver out to you *general* War-
 rants, commanding you to search the
public Houses on the Lord's-Day, to
 apprehend and bring before them all
 such Persons as you shall hear *Smear-*
ing or *Cursing*, or shall see *Drunk*, or
prophaning the Lord's-Day, or guilty
 of any other Immorality or Vice; I
 say, where you have such Warrants
 delivered to you, remember that you
 DULY and FAITHFULLY execute
 them, and do whatever they direct
 you: For you are upon your
 OATHS to execute duly ALL Pre-
 cepts and Warrants to you direct-
 ed by the Justices.

The last Part of your Oath is in
 general Terms, *that you shall well*
and duly, according to your Know-
ledge, Power, and Ability, do and ex-
ecute

ecute ALL OTHER THINGS *be-*
longing to the Office of a Constable, so
 long as you shall continue therein.
 Here is a large Field for your Industry
 in the Suppressing of Vice, if you will
 be faithful to your Trust: For you
 are equally concerned to see that all
 other Statutes, against prophane
 Swearing and Cursing, Blasphemy,
 &c. whether made before or since this
 Form of your Oath was appointed,
 be duly put in Execution, and the
 Offenders brought to Punishment. I
 will instance in some things which
 certainly *belong to your Office,* because
you, and none else, can do them;
 and what I shall instance in, shall
 be by the Opinion of some able and
 eminent Lawyers, who have been
 consulted upon these Points.

Help to a Nat.
Ref. of Man-
ners, p. 80.

1. A Constable may, *without a War-*
rant, stop any Persons whom he shall
 find driving of Carts, Horses, Cattle,
 &c. on the Lord's-Day, and carry
 them before a Justice of Peace, to
 convict them upon the Statute 29 *Car.*

2. *c. 7.*

2. He may do the same, without
 a Warrant, with such as he shall find
 at any Sports and Pastimes on that
 Day; contrary to 1 *Car. 1. c. 1.*

3. The

3. The same with such as he shall find Tippling in public Houses, &c. contrary to 21 Jac. 1. c. 7.

4. With Shop-keepers also, or others selling or exposing to Sale any Goods, or Wares on the Lord's-Day; contrary to 1 Jac. 1. c. 22. Sect. 28. or 29 Car. 2. c. 7.

5. The same also with such as he shall find Drunk, or Blaspheming, or prophanely Swearing or Cursing; contrary to 4 Jac. 1. c. 5. 9 and 10 W. 3. c. 32. 6 and 7 W. 3. c. 11.

Thus, Gentlemen, I have shown you what belongs to *your Office* with Respect to the Suppression and Punishment of Vice; and that both from the Laws of the Kingdom, and from your Oath: I will only beg you, that, according to the Tenor of this last, you would *well and duly, to the best of your Knowledge, Power and Ability, do and execute all things belonging to that Office, so long as you continue therein*; and remember that if you do not, you are *forsworn*.

I will now address my self to the *Church-Wardens*, who are Officers by *Ecclesiastical Authority* sworn also to this very Trust to INFORM of the Vices of their Parish, that Scandals
may

Dr. Pride-
aux's Dire-
ctions to
Church-War-
dens, p. 17.

may be removed, and Immoralities and Irreligion punished by the Censures of *the Church*. Your Oath is, that “ You shall well and truly execute the Office of a *Church-Warden* in the Parish of ----- for the ensuing Year, and to the best of your Skill and Knowledge PRESENT such Persons and Things, as are presentable by the Ecclesiastical Laws of the Realm. And that you may know what Persons and Things *are* presentable by the Ecclesiastical Laws, you have usually, I suppose, delivered to you, when you are sworn, a Book of Articles, containing the Particulars of what the Church expects you should present upon that Oath you have taken. I shall nevertheless shew you from the *Canons*, (which are the Ecclesiastical Laws of *England*,) and from the *Statutes*, the Power and Obligation of your Office (and consequently the special Matters you are sworn to inform of) with Respect to Vice, Prophaneness, and Immorality.

3 *Fac. 1. c. 4.*
§. 4, 5, 6.

The Statute of King *James I.* obliges the *Church-Wardens* (as well as Constables) to present once a Year, at the Quarter-Session of the Peace,
all

all Monthly *Absenters from Church*; laying the same Penalty upon them of *Twenty Shillings* if they neglect, and allowing the same Reward of *Forty Shillings* if they discharge their Duty.

The 90th Canon enjoins *Church-Wardens*, *Can. 90.*

and their Assistants, diligently to see that all their Parishioners duly resort to Church on *Sundays*, and there continue the whole Time of divine Service. All that neglect to come, (having no great or urgent Cause of Absence) are first to be admonished by you, and then, if they reform not, you are to present them.

Upon this Article observe, (1.) That a Person's being *absent* from his Parish Church (except he be known to be of ill Health, or gone a Journey, or to be a professed Protestant Dissenter,) is ground sufficient for you to present Him; it lies upon *Him* to prove that he attended Divine Service that Day at any other Church. The Act of Toleration has exempted *Dissenters*, and it would be vexatious and illegal to present them: But that Law was never design'd to favour *Atheists*, or such as pretending to be of the Church of *England*, frequent no public Service at all.

(2.) That you are not only to present Persons that *do not come* to Church, but also such as *Can. 111.* behave themselves *irreverently* and *indecently* *§ 18.* *there*; either walking about, talking, or making any other Disturbance, or not continu-

ing in the Church till divine Service and Ser-
 1 *Eliz. c.* mon be fully ended. (3.) That the *Statute*-
 2. §. 14. *Law*, as well as the *Canon*, obliges all, not
 only to resort to Church every *Sunday*, but
 to *abide there orderly and soberly* the whole time
 Dr. Pride- of Service and Sermon, and for *any of these*
 aux p. 4, 5. *Offences* abovementioned the Offender may
 have the Penalty of Twelve Pence (accord-
 ing to the Statute of Queen *Eliz.* served on
 him, or be presented at the Visitation, to be
 punished by the Censures of the Church.
 (4.) That for being wholly absent from
 Church (without reasonable Excuse) on any
 Lord's-Day, any *one Justice out of Session*, by
 3 *Fac. 1.* another Statute, has Power to levy that Pe-
 6. 4. §. 27. nalty. (5.) That all such Persons may be
 dealt with the same way, and are liable to
 the same Penalty, who (according to the
 scandalous Custom of too many,) *despise* the
 public Service, loiter away their Time in the
 Church-Yard, in the Fields, or in an Ale-
 House perhaps till the greatest Part of it be
 over, and then come into the Church: For
 by the Statute last referred to, they are bound
 not only to resort every *Sunday* to some
 Church, but are there *to hear divine Service*,
 or else they forfeit as above.

By Canon 112. the Minister, *Church-*
Wardens, and Assistants, shall yearly, within
 Forty Days after *Easter*, exhibit to the Bishop
 or his Chancellor, the Names of all above
 the

the Age of Sixteen Years within their Parish that did not receive the Communion.

By the Statutes, *Church-Wardens* 4 Fac. 1. c. 5. §. 7.
and *Sidemen* (as well as Constables,) 21 Fac. 1. c. 7. §. 5.
are expressly to be charged in the Oath of their Office to present Offences of *Drunkenness*, *Tippling*, and public Houses *suffering Persons to tipple* in them.

But the *Canon* has very much enlarged your Obligation, and bound you to inform of *all Manner of Vice*, *Prophaneness* and *Debauchery*: “ Re-
“ quiring you FAITHFULLY to pre-
“ sent ALL and EVERY the Offen-
“ ders in *Adultery*, *Whoredom*, *Incest*,
“ *Drunkenness*, *prophane Swearing*, or
“ any other *Uncleannefs* and *Wicked-*
“ *ness of Life*, that they and every of
“ them may be punished by the Se-
“ verity of the Laws, according to
“ their Deserts. Here you see, the
Ecclesiastical Laws of the Kingdom
have made it Part of your Office (to
which you are solemnly sworn,) to in-
form not only of *Drunkenness* and
Tippling (as the Statutes also bind you,)
but of all sorts of *Lewdness* and *De-*
bauchery, *prophane Swearing*, and what-
b 2 ever

Can. 117.

Can. 26.

ever else is contrary to Christian Piety and good Morals in your Parish. So that if you know any of your Parishioners (be his Quality or Circumstances what they will) that is guilty of these, or any of these, you are obliged to present him at the next Visitation, or you are guilty yourselves of PERJURY; and by the 117th Canon, if you do wittingly and willingly *omit* to present him, you are to be proceeded against in the Ecclesiastical Courts as for wilful PERJURY, and by the 26th Canon, to be *debarred the COMMUNION*. This last expresses such an *Abhorrence* of a Church-warden's Neglect in these Matters, that it forbids the Minister *in any wise* to admit you to that Sacrament, who, (to give it you in the Words of the Canon its self) *having taken your OATHS to present all such public Offences as you are particularly charged to enquire of in your several Parishes, shall (notwithstanding your said OATHS, and that your faithful discharging of them is the chief Means whereby public Sins and Offences may be reformed and punished) wittingly and willingly, DESPERATELY and IRRELIGIOUSLY*

LIGIOUSLY incur the HORRID Crime of PERJURY, either in neglecting or refusing to Present, &c.

Nay further, your Oath obliges you not only to inform of what you can present *of your own Knowledge* in those matters, but also upon *common Frame*, if a Person be credibly and generally ^{Can. 115, & 117.} reported in the Neighbourhood to be *Dr. Prideaux* a Swearer, a Drunkard, an Adulterer, a ^{p. 1.} Fornicator, or any other way immoral or prophane, you are bound to *present* him, and thereby oblige him to clear himself if he can. If any well ^{Can. 116.} disposed Person *advertise* and *give you Notice* of any such Offender, and urge you to present him, you are bound to have a Regard thereto, and to do it upon such Information and Advice. And if you wilfully neglect in either ^{Canon 26, & 117.} of these Cases, you are to be debarred the Communion, and prosecuted ^{|| Dr. Prideaux, p. 2.} as before || for Perjury.

By this Time I hope you are well satisfied both of the Extent of your Oath in Presentments of Vice and Prophaneness, and that you are severely *punishable* if you neglect them: You are to be driven away with Disgrace from the holy Table of the

b 3 Lord,

Lord, rejected as the most notorious Criminals, and prosecuted as perjured Wretches. And very good Reason there is for this Severity: For if you make nothing of breaking thro' a solemn OATH, you are presumed to make as little of a Sacramental VOW; and if, by not duly presenting Offenders, you *encourage* them (as certainly you do) in their Wickedness, you share the Guilt of all their Crimes, and are justly chargeable before God and the World with the Scandal of them.

Canon 116.

But that you may not complain of the *Difficulty* or *Charge* of making such Presentments, the Canon (tho' it gives you *Liberty* to make them to the spiritual Courts as often as you will) does not *bind* you to make them oftener than twice a Year, (except in that of the *Bishop's Visitation*;) for which Presentments, the Register of any Court, where they are to be exhibited, shall not receive in one Year above *Four Pence*; and for *voluntary* Presentments made *out of Visitation Times*, no *Fee at all*; if he does, he shall upon Complaint be suspended from his Office for a Month for every such Extortion.

I will

I will only add, that in several Cases of Immorality and Prophane-ness, you are equally concerned with the Constable, to execute Warrants, and to punish Offenders.

As (1.) In levying the Penalty of ^{1 Jac. 1. c. 9.} *Ten Shillings* upon Inn-keepers and ^{§. 3.} Ale-House-Keepers, suffering Persons to tipple in their Houses.

(2.) In levying the Penalty of Three Shillings and Four Pence for ^{1 Car. 1. c. 1.} Sports and Pastimes on the Lord's-Day; that of Twenty Shillings upon Carriers, Waggoners, Drovers, &c. travelling; and Six Shillings and Eight ^{3 Car. 1. c. 1.} Pence upon Butchers, killing or selling Meat upon that Day; and of Five Shillings upon such as prophane ^{29 Car. 2. c. 7.} it by the Exercise of their Trades or other worldly Labour thereupon.

(3.) In levying the Penalty upon ^{21 Jac. 1. c. 20.} prophane Swearing and Cursing.

(4.) You are the *only* Officers no- ^{6 & 7 W. 3. c. 11.} minated by the Statutes to levy the Penalty of *Twelve Pence* upon such as ^{1 Eliz. c. 2. §. 14.} absent from Church, or behave them- ^{3 Jac. 1. c. 4. §. 27.} selves disorderly there. And,

(5.) Tho' you are not obliged to ^{4 Jac. 1. c. 5. §. 2, 4,} levy the Five Shillings for Drunken-ness, and the Three Shillings and Four

Pence for Tippling, yet the Money is to be *paid into your Hands* by the Offender, or by the Constable, for the Use of the Poor.

I will not repeat what I have said before to the Constables, concerning the Execution of Warrants, and disposing of the Money levied thereby: For you cannot but acknowledge that where these things are made by Law a Part of *your* Office as well as *their's*, your Oath (which is *well and truly to execute your Office*,) obliges you to the same Care and Integrity as *they* are bound to.

And now, Gentlemen, having fully and fairly represented to you, from the Nature of your several Trusts or Offices, from the solemn Oaths you take to acquit your selves faithfully in them, and from the Laws of the Kingdom which expressly require it from you, that you ought to *inform* of such as are vicious, immoral, and prophane, and bring them to their deserved Punishment; give me leave in Two or Three Words to address my self to you all together.

The Constitution of *England* has taken a great deal of pious Care for the
the

the Suppression of Vice. We have very good *Laws* to punish it, and a settled residing Magistracy in all Counties, Cities, and Corporation-Towns, to *put them in Execution*; we have *Courts Ecclesiastical* frequently held, where Offenders may and ought to be prosecuted by the Discipline of the Church; we have *Temporal Courts of Justice* also held in every County Five or Six Times in the Year, (the *Affizes*, and *Quarter-Sessions*,) as well to punish the Prophanes and Vicious, as to right the Injured. And because all this will be to little or no Purpose, without *Informations* given, there are *Constables* and *Church-Wardens* (Two or Three Men in every Parish) appointed by Law, and *sworn* to this very Service, constantly to inspect the Morals, and observe the Conversation of the Neighbourhood, and to make a just Report upon their Oaths of all Offenders within their District, that they may be brought to due Correction. But beside these Parish-Officers, who are a *standing Watch* upon Immorality, there is also at every *Affize* and *Quarter-Session* a *Grand-Jury* sworn, consisting of Twelve sub-

substantial Freeholders at least, to make the like Presentments, and amongst other things, to present such *Constables* as have been negligent in their Duty. Were all these SWORN INFORMERS as careful and diligent in keeping their Oaths as they ought to be, a general Reformation of Manners would be no tedious or difficult Task, and private Persons would either *not need* to inform, or would be more generally *thanked and applauded* (as they ought to be) when they do. But the cursed PERJURY of many, that have that solemn Trust and Oath upon them, renders other *voluntary* Informers absolutely necessary to the Suppression of Vice; and yet makes informing so strange and unusual a thing, that it is look'd upon (tho' undeservedly) with Indignation and Contempt; while Wickedness triumphs in the Negligence and Perjury of those that should suppress it.

Tho' Perjury be a *horrid Sin*, yet horrid as it is, 'tis one of the *most prevailing* Sins in *England*. How many Thousand Persons have we every Year *forsworn* in Parish-Offices and Sessi-

Session-Juries! I mean, as to those Particulars which I have been proving to be their Duty towards the Punishment of Vice. The most of them, I'm afraid, do look upon their Oaths as *Things of Course*, and little to be regarded; if we may judge by their after practice: For 'tis plain, the most of them do not act as if they thought themselves under any Obligation from them. But Gentlemen, can there be any thing in the World more sacred than an OATH? Is it not a solemn Appeal to GOD for your Sincerity in what you promise? And is not that Appeal an Acknowledgment that he will punish Falshood? Nay further, is it not a *calling down* the Curse and Vengeance of God upon your selves if you be false? Do you not, by laying your Hand upon the Gospels, declare in Effect, that *you hope for no Salvation by Christ* if you perform not, to the best of your Power, what you then promise? And do not the Words, *So help you GOD*, sufficiently prove, that the Intention of your Oath is so; and that you are to expect no Mercy or Favour from God, either in this World or the next, if
you

you do not answer the Trust which is then and there committed to you, with an active, faithful Diligence? And do you not *personally* and *expresly* give your Consent to this heavy Curse, by *kissing the Book*? How then dare any of you venture to play with such an awful Engagement? Is it that you think the Oath of a *Parish-Officer*, or a *Grand-Jury-Man*, is not as sacred and as binding as that of an *Evidence at the Bar*? What is it can make the Difference? The one appeals to God for his Sincerity and Fidelity in performing what he promises; the other for the Truth of what he is going to attest by way of Evidence: But both of them are equally Appeals to God, and Imprecations of his Vengeance upon wilful Perjury. The Scriptures, which have made it a Sin *to bear false Witness*, have made it the very same to break a *promissory Oath*. If a *Man swear an Oath, to bind his Soul with a Bond, he shall not break his Word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his Mouth*; that is, he shall exactly perform whatever he has engaged to do. If you give in a false Evidence, you are unjust to your
Neigh-

Num. 30. 2.

Neighbour: But if you are perjured in your *Office*, you are unjust to GOD, because 'tis for his Glory that you are to see that Vice be punished and suppressed; you are injurious to your *Neighbour* too, by not doing what you might have done towards reclaiming him by a seasonable Correction, and promoting his eternal Happiness by Reformation; and you are treacherous to your *Magistrates*, and to your *Country*, who depend upon you to bring the Disorders of ill Men to Punishment.

Whatever you may think, it is a certain Truth, that whoever of you shall dare to neglect or falsifie your Trust, with Respect to what you have sworn, and what your Country thereupon very justly expects from you, must be necessarily supposed either to believe no GOD, or not to believe that he concerns himself in the Affairs of the World, or boldly and impudently to DEFIE his Vengeance: For if you either believed a God, or that he takes any Notice of what you say and do, or if you had any Fear of him, or any Reverence for him, you could not hope to escape unpunished, when you have

Mal. 3. 5.

Zach. 5. 4.

have so solemnly and openly called upon him to revenge your Negligence and Perjury upon you, as by your Oath its self you do. Remember that terrible Declaration he has added to the *Third Commandment*, --- *The Lord will not hold him guiltless* (that is, he will certainly and severely punish him) *that taketh his Name in vain.* I will come near to you in Judgment, says he in another Place, and I will be a swift Witness against the Sorcerers, and against the Adulterers, and against the FALSE SWEARERS, &c. If you will not be Witnesses (as you ought to be) against Vice, he will be a Witness against you, that you had taken a most sacred OATH to that Purpose, but took no Care to perform it. His Curse (as he elsewhere threatens) shall enter into the House of him that SWEARETH FALSLY by his Name, and it shall remain in the midst of his House, and shall consume it with the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof. Temporal Judgments may, but HELL and EVERLASTING VENGEANCE will assuredly overtake the Perjured, if they prevent it not by a timely and severe Repentance.

I leave these things upon your Consciences, and the God of Heaven make them effectual to convince you of your Duty, and engage you to perform your Oaths; that we, or our Children at least, may be so happy as to see (through *your* Care and Diligence, as well as that of *Magistrates* and *private Persons* in their respective Stations,) a regular, sober, religious, and reformed Age, to the Glory of GOD, the Honour of the *Church of England*, and the Peace and Prosperity of *Great Britain*.

I leave these things upon your Con-
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A
Second ESSAY

U P O N T H E
EXECUTION *of the* LAWS

A G A I N S T
Immorality & Propphaneness.

Philaretus, **J**UST returned Home from paying a Visit in the Neighbourhood, walked into his Garden, full of serious Reflexions upon the Difference he observed betwixt the Rules of Christianity and the Practice of Christians: For the Sense he had of Religion influenced him, not only to a strict Conversation of his own, but to as generous a Concern for the Glory of God, and the Virtue and Happiness of Mankind. This public Spirit was not the Talent of *Eulabes*, who came in to see him at that Time: A Principle of Piety seem'd

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A Second Essay upon the

to govern his Life; but a Principle of Cowardice and Fear (which most Men dignifie with the Title of *worldly Prudence*,) too much contracted his Zeal. Coming up to him in the Garden, there passed not much Discourse, before *Philaretus* started the Subject which lay then particularly upon his Thoughts.

I was engaged when you came (said he) in some Remarks, that will not easily be diverted. It troubles me, to see that noble System of Religion, left us by the Son of God, so wretchedly martyr'd and disguised in the Behaviour of most of those that profess it. Can you look abroad into the World, without Indignation, and observe the Scandalous *Hypocrisie* of such as pretend to be Followers of the holy Jesus, while they lead a dissolute and prophane Life?

Eul. No; but the Devil and they are before hand with us in the Charge of Hypocrisie, which they have very artfully thrown upon all that are indeed religious.

Phil. That is, because they judge of others (as they square their own Lives) by the Force of *corrupted Nature*. They find it leading *them* to the Vices we com-

complain of, and they follow it: They presume also (and that rightly) that *all* Men have the same natural Appetite to what is vicious with themselves: And therefore they conclude, we do but *dissemble our Affection* to what, for some private Interest, or Vanity, or ill Humour, we *forbear to practise*. Now this Consequence is entirely wrong: For tho' the Corruption of Nature is the same in all Men, 'tis the very *Design of Religion* to oppose that Corruption, and to rectifie our Nature; and those who form their Lives in earnest by this Scheme, do it not to *dissemble*, but to get the *Conquest over* their irregular Appetites, which, from the eternal Truth of God in the holy Scriptures, they are convinced, do lead all that will be governed by them to their own Destruction. We find in Matters relating to our Health, that what we most delight in, and desire, is usually most prejudicial to us. 'Tis the same in the Case before us; the corrupt Desires of Nature hurry us on to Vice, and that to everlasting Misery. This God declares, and we believe, and being serious in believing it, we betake our selves to Religion to check, over-rule, and mortifie these vi-

A Second Essay upon the

cious Inclinations that would prove our Ruine. We are very fure too, that God has *enjoined* us all this Strictness and Self-Denial for which the World reproaches us; and we know our selves *bound to obey him*, however Nature may resent it. We observe also by Reason and Experience, that *solid Pleasure* is only to be found in a good and virtuous Life; that inward Satisfaction of Conscience we enjoy in the doing of our Duty, and the well-grounded Hopes we have of immortal Glory, being a far greater Pleasure than all that Debauchery can afford. And *lastly*, we are convinced of the *Reasonableness* and *Excellency* of such a Course considered in it self, as it makes us live and act like *Men*; while such as pursue the degenerate Appetites of Vice, descend below themselves, and live like *Beasts*. Now I think, from all these Topicks, a religious Man has enough to justify his being so, and to clear him from the silly Imputation of Hypocrisie, thrown upon him by such as think it strange he runs not to the same Excess of Riot which they do. But, if there be such a thing as Hypocrisie at all, the Charge falls heavily and truly upon them, who, as I said before, pretend
to

Execution of the Laws.

§

to the Faith and Baptism of *Christians*, and live the Life of *Brutes* and *Heathens*.

Eul. The Retortion is certainly very just upon them: For a *Christian* is no other, than one that pretends to be governed by the holy Laws and Example of *Christ*; and who can bear the Absurdity, when a debauched *lewd* Fellow calls himself a Disciple of the *pure* and *chast* Redeemer of the World, whose Laws do utterly forbid us *Fornication, and all Uncleanneſs, and Filthineſs, and fooliſh Talking?* When the *Drunkard* would be thought a *Christian* too, in spite of the Example of his *temperate Master*, and the Laws of *Christianity*, which ſtrictly command us *to abſtain from Rioting and Exceſs?* When the prophane Wretch, under the Guilt of all his *Oaths and Curses*, and his *Contempt of Religion*, will yet ſet up for a *Christian*, notwithstanding the Example of a *pious* and *holy Jeſus*, and the repeated Cautions he has given, that *above all things we ſhould not ſwear, that we ſhould * put away all Bitterneſs, Wrath, Anger and Clamour, † be holy in all Manner of Converſation?* When he who ſeldom or never appears at Church, would

Eph. 5. 3, 4.

*Rom. 13. 13.
Eph. 5. 8.*

*Jam. 5. 12.
Matt. 5. 34.
* Eph. 4. 31.
† 1 Pet. 1. 15.*

still have the World believe him to be a Disciple of Christ, who *constantly attended the Synagogue and the Temple,* Heb. 10. 25. and has warned us *not to forsake the Assembling of our selves together?* I must own, *Philaretus*, you're in the Right, and there never was Hypocrisie in the World, if this be not Hypocrisie.

Phil. The Truth is, Matters of *Speculation* have absurdly swallowed up Matters of *Practice*. Almost all our Zeal is run into Disputes: *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, is enough in most Mens Opinion (at least they act as if it were) to make amends for the Want of that *Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord*. Whereas the whole Christian Gospel bends it self to the Establishment of *practical Piety and Virtue*, and laies down the *right Faith*, as a Means and as a Guide to a good *Life*. So that to be vicious and immoral, under the Profession of Christianity, and the Church of England, is but to force our way to Hell thro' the best Advantages for getting to Heaven. Yet thus, in *Fact*, things are. Is not the Practice of Religion generally sneered out of Countenance?

Is

Is not a sober virtuous Man (especially if he be devout and pious too) despised by almost all about him? Does any thing make a Man more ridiculous with some, than seriously to quote a Text of Scripture, except it be in the Pulpit, and there they have brought themselves to disregard it as a thing of Course? Does any thing promote a louder Laugh than citing Scripture to prophane it? Is not this, or lewd obscene Discourse, the very thing which, in the Account of most Men, gives all the *Spirit* and *Point* to that *Wit* which they are pleased to call *the Life of Conversation*? Do we not every where see the Lord's Day prophaned too, with the utmost Liberties, by Idleness, Drinking, or other Pastimes, and *Judaism* thrown in the Teeth of all that observe it? Does not Drunkenness, Swearing, Cursing, and Debauchery, every where abound? And would it not be more generous for such Men to throw off the *Profession* of Christianity, and openly to declare themselves Heathens or Atheists, as they are, than all this while to avow themselves *Christians*, as if they had no other Design than to burlesque our Profession, to throw the very

blackest Dregs of Malice in the Face of their Saviour, and crucifie him every Day and every Hour afresh?

Eul. You speak the Sense of every good Man; for this, in a Protestant Country, where we enjoy the free Use of our Bibles, and are often reminded of our Duty by good and practical Sermons, and pretend high to a *reformed* Religion, cannot but be extremely *scandalous*.

Phil. And you may add, extremely *dangerous* too. We are the last of all the *Northern* Kingdoms that have kept our ancient and well-balanced Constitution of Government, which all our Neighbours once enjoyed as well as we; but if we go on to provoke God in this Manner, 'tis well if *their* Misfortunes do not at length overtake *us*. And certainly, the more God has blessed and favoured us, the more severe will he be, when he comes to execute Judgment upon us for abusing his Favour. *The Land shall then enjoy her Sabbaths, (as he threatened the Jews of old, for their Prophanation of that sacred Day,) so long as it lies desolate, it shall rest.* If we will not rest from our Labours on the Lord's-Day now, a Time will come

Lev. 26. 34,
35:

come perhaps when the Destruction of our Country shall leave us nothing to employ our Labour upon. If we will now prophane it by our Diversions, 'tis possible we may live to see it spent in Tears and Sorrow, under the Oppression of an Enemy. I cannot but think of that remarkable Place in the Prophecy of Jeremiah: *Jer. 17. 24. If you diligently hearken unto me (says 25, 27. God) to bring in no Burthen on the Sabbath-Day, but hallow the Sabbath-Day to do no Work therein, then shall there enter into the Gates of this City Kings and Princes sitting on the Throne of David, and this City shall remain for ever, &c. But if ye will not hearken to me, to hallow the Sabbath-Day, then will I kindle a Fire in the Gates thereof, and it shall devour the Palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched. The Practice of prophane Swearing too is reckoned up amongst those Sins that expose a Nation to the Vengeance and the Wrath of God; and so is Lewdness. For, says the Prophet Hosea, by Swearing, and committing Adultery they break out, &c. therefore shall the Land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish.* *Hos. 4. 2, 3.*

Eul. No doubt that God, whose Holiness is his very Nature, and his Na-

Nature unchangeable, as He hated these Sins in *them*, hates them now in *us*, and will for ever hate them. But there seems to be some special Provocation in those Sins of prophaning the Day devoted to his Service, and abusing his sacred Name in Swearing, as his own Honour is immediately concerned.

Phil. His Honour is concerned wherever his holy Laws are trampled upon, be it by one Vice or another. *Lewdness*, I told you, provokes him as well as *Swearing*. How shall I pardon thee for this? (says he) thy Children have forsaken me --- they committed Adultery, and assembled themselves by Troops in the Harlots Houses, &c. Shall I not visit for these things? Shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this? The same thing he complains of in other *
Jer. 5. 7, 8, 9. Places, and repeats it as a Cause of his Judgments. *Drunkenness* also, as well as *Lewdness* and *Prophaneness*, hands the bitter Cup of Vengeance to a People; Wo to them that rise up early in the Morning, that continue till Night, till Wine inflame them; wo to them that are mighty to drink Wine, and Men of Strength to mingle strong Drink; therefore is the Anger of the Lord kindled against

* *Jer.* 23. 10.
Ezek. 22. 9.
 11.

Isa. 5. 11.

Ver. 22.

Ver. 25.

against his People, and he has stretched forth his Hand against them, and hath smitten them: ---For all this his Anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still. To the same Purpose God has also declared himself * elsewhere against this Sin. So that, if we believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, we have Reason more than enough to conclude, that any one of these rampant, scandalous Vices, which we see every where so common amongst us (and much more *all of them together*) bids fair for the utter Destruction of this Kingdom.

* Isa. 28. 1, 2,

3.

Hab. 2. 15,

16, 17.

Eul. But we may hope, that tho' the Judgments of God should fall upon the Nation for them, he would still, in the Midst of Judgment, remember Mercy, and not punish the Innocent with the Guilty.

Phil. Offenders are to expect their own particular Punishment, when they come to be adjudged to their eternal State: But when God undertakes to execute his Wrath upon a Nation, where such Crimes are suffered, either with public Countenance, or without public Control, the whole Nation is guilty in the Sight of God, and no Man is to expect Exemption.

When

When a Country is in Rebellion, does not the Prince send his Army into it with Fire and Sword, and all alike must suffer by their Fury, the whole being denominated from the greater Part? especially, (which answers to the present Case) if those who are not actually found in Arms against him have yet *submitted* to the Rebels, and will not take up Arms to assist in the Suppressing of them. This is ever interpreted a giving Countenance to the Rebellion, and they deserve to suffer promiscuously with the rest.

Eul. I apprehend you, Sir, you would have good Men bestir themselves to *check* these Vices, and *suppress* them.

Phil. You apprehend me right; And I think it high Time for them so to do, when the provoking Causes of God's Anger are gaining Ground so fast towards our Destruction. And in Truth, *Eulabes*, we have no better way, in my Opinion, to declare our selves against them, than to bring such Practices to legal Punishment, and by giving due Information against them, to call in the Aid of the Civil Magistrate. We have many good
Laws

Laws in Force against Immorality and Prophaneness ; we have repeated Proclamations, from the Throne, to urge the Execution of them ; and in several Parts of the Nation we have good Examples to encourage the Attempt.

Eul. But methinks there are *milder* Object. I.
Methods first to be tried. *Consideration*, perhaps, assisted by the Grace of God, may at length bring People to themselves. All Men, even the most debauched, have sometimes wise and serious Reflexions to check them in their Career ; let us wait awhile to see the Effect of these.

Phil. Consideration, it's true, may have a very good Effect ; but how will you get them to Consideration ? Is any thing more generally neglected ? The most vicious (as you observe) are haunted indeed sometimes with serious and wise Reflexions ; but is any thing more unwelcome to them ? Are they not industriously jostled aside as meer Effects of the Spleen ? And what can we hope from them, when they are not suffered to make any stay upon the Mind ? The Grace of God *can* indeed do all things, but *it will not* without Mens own
Ap-

Application and Improvement. What shall bring them now to a Sense of the *Value* and *Necessity* of Consideration, so as to make them willing to *indulge* these Checks of Conscience, but *Consideration it self*? And how to prevail with them, for that is still the very same Question. 'Tis plain to me, that if you let them quietly alone, they will doze on in the same thoughtless stupid Lethargy as before: But *Punishment by Law* perhaps may reduce them to closer thinking, and make way for the Grace of God to operate upon their Consciences.

Eul. What do you think of *Preaching*? may not *that* be as effectual? Preaching is a Means established by *Divine Authority* to instruct and to reform the World, and therefore has its particular Advantage, not only as the most *regular* and *proper* way, but the most *hopeful* too; the Grace of God being more likely to attend an *Institution of his own*, than a *meer humane Ordinance*, Punishment by Law.

Phil. I agree with you that Preaching is a Divine Institution, and appointed for the Ends you speak of; so is *reading the Scriptures*: And both would be of admirable Use were they

religiously and constantly attended to. But are not these either totally neglected, or generally look'd upon as things of Course, and little minded? Is it not the common Practice of many, *not to show themselves at Church* at all? And how many others, that come, do it for *no other End* than to shew themselves! and sleep and trifle away the Time, and hearken to nothing but *the Text*, nor ever think any more of *that* than just while the Minister repeats it! How many others, who, going further than these, do yet waste all their Attention upon the *Stile* and *Eloquence* of the Sermon, or *the Delivery* of the Preacher, and thro' want of a right Application, are neither the wiser nor the better for what they hear! How many others, who, if they vouchsafe to regard *the Substance* of the Discourse, apply whatever is close and pressing in it (not to *themselves*, but) *to their Neighbours*! And how many others again, who, if it bear down upon their own particular Vices, and it may be, chafe them for the present, betake themselves from Church to the *Tavern*, or the *Ale-House*, or upon some impertinent Visit, where they begin to take Heart again, and
fancy

fancy themselves too strong for the *Parson* (as they call him)! his own Character is taken to Pieces and ridiculed, his Doctrine censured, condemned, and hooted out of Countenance; and thus the Impression of it is entirely stifled. Or if they don't come up to this, yet idle Chat, and Company, and a Glass, wash off both the Fatigue of the Service, and the Care of their Salvation together, and the Sermon can obtain no serious Consideration afterwards. As for *reading the Scriptures*; if it be in the Church, 'tis minded just as the Sermon is, and it may be not so much; and at Home, I'm afraid those Persons, whose Reformation we now speak of, spend very little Time, and less Care, (most probably none at all of either) in that Work. So that to me there seems to be a Necessity of putting them in Mind of their Miscarriages some other way. These are indeed the proper Means which God has appointed, and where they are diligently applied to, his Grace will make them effectual: But you see, in Fact, they are *not* applied to as they ought, and therefore do not produce the Effect intended. Beside, as those are the
general

general Means by which *God himself* is pleased to act on his Part towards their Reformation, so he has required *us* also on *our* Part, to contribute our utmost towards it ; which may be done, I hope, to very good Purpose in the way that I propose.

Eul. I think we may, with greater Tenderneſs, and greater Hopes of Succeſs, do *our* Part to reclaim them by *Reproof* and *good Advice*.

Phil. True, it will be with greater Tenderneſs, and I ſhould be heartily glad if the Succeſs would answer. But Reproof and good Advice *are ſeldom given*, either thro' Fear or want of due Concern ; and when they are, don't you obſerve, they're generally *taken ill*, tho' never ſo diſcreet and private. 'Tis look'd upon as a troubleſome and impertinent Office, rejected as Cant, or diſregarded as being only *Words*. Yet I have nothing to ſay againſt making the *Experiment* before the Authority of the Law be called in to puniſh. With mild and generous Tempers it may have a happy Effect ; and therefore by all Means let it be tried, wherever you think it may do good ; But as there are few that will prevail on themſelves to undertake this charitable Office, ſo there is no Reason to expect
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that the greatest Part of Men will be wrought upon that way; especially considering, that they have already long withstood the Reproofs and Instructions of the Pulpit, and of their private Friends too, which we cannot but suppose them often to have had. And I hope you will grant me, that where Reproof and Advice are plainly to no Purpose, or cannot conveniently be given, it will be Charity to try some other Methods.

Eul. Methinks good Example should have some Influence upon a Neighbourhood, to draw Men on to Virtue, or at least to make them ashamed of their Vices: Example we know is generally of more Effect than Precept.

Phil. If Men were wise and virtuously inclined, such Examples would have their Weight: But you are to consider Men under the Biass of natural Corruption; and as they are so, one ill Example will do more than Twenty good ones, because it falls in with the Grain of Nature, and soothes those sinful Appetites that were too strong before. Whereas all the Oratory of a good Man's Life, persuades against the Bent of Inclination, and therefore has but little Force: And this,

this, Experience, as well as Reason, shews you.

Eul. You have taken Pains to prove that the Methods which I have offered are not likely to succeed, pray, tell me, what better Issue may we hope for from the new Schemes which you propose? To me they seem as liable to Exception as the other; and I'm afraid will do as little good. But in the first Place, I can't think the State or the Civil Magistrate have any thing; properly, to do, in such Offences as are not in themselves a Nuisance to Society, or *public and political Mischiefs*. *Object. II.*

Phil. It will be no hard Matter to prove, that all those Vices, which we talk of punishing, are such as you yourself, by this Objection, allow it fit to punish. But to let that alone for the present, and suppose that Drunkenness, Swearing, Lewdness, &c. affect no Body else than the Offenders only, which yet I have very good Reasons to deny: The Laws of the State are, as I take it, to provide for *the Honour of God*, as well as for the Safety of the Common-wealth, and for the Good of every Subject in his private Capacity, so far as is consistent with the general and public Good. And of *See the Preface to Part I.*

this our Superiours were plainly sensible, when they *made* the Laws, which continue still in Force, against those Practices; well knowing, that a Christian Government can never acquit its self *to Almighty God*, without taking all possible Care for his Honour, by punishing such Words and Actions as are offensive to him; nor *to the Subject* neither, without inspecting so far, even into his more private and personal Behaviour, as to check him when he is running headlong to his own Ruin, and to put him in Mind of the Duty he owes to *God* as well as to *Society*; promoting thereby (so much as public Authority can do it) the Reformation, Repentance, and eternal Happiness of all that are under its Obedience. Nor is it *Great Britain* only, and the present Age, but all Ages, and all Nations, have more or less applied themselves to suppress Prophaneness and Immorality, by the Power of the Civil Magistrate.

Eul. But why then did our Saviour say to the Woman, taken in Adultery; *Neither do I condemn thee; Go, and sin no more?* He would not prescribe any temporal Punishment for her, but
leaves

leaves her to the Judgment of God: Or, if you reply, that he would not encroach upon the Magistrate's Office, by passing any Sentence himself; yet why did he not deliver her up then to the Correction of the Law, that tho' himself could not punish her, some Body else might? Again, observe what *Difficulties* he laies upon Informers, as if he had a Mind effectually to discourage their Practice, in his Answer to the Scribes and Pharisees that brought her; ---*Let him that is without Sin amongst you cast the first Stone at her.* From all which I argue, that our Saviour did not think temporal Punishments proper in these Cases, and that where they *are* appointed, he would not have us *forward* to bring Offenders under them.

Phil. You argue wrong then. For by the previous Question he asked her, [*Where are thy Accusers? Has no Man condemned thee?*] he rather seems to approve the Law, and refers her to the Magistrate for her Punishment. So in another Place, when a certain Person would have engaged his Authority, to divide an Inheritance, his Answer was, *who made me a Judge or a Divider over you?* Would you in-

fer from hence, that Controversies about Estates are not to be determined, because our Lord, being no temporal Magistrate, would not concern himself in these things? So that his [*neither do I condemn thee,*] implies no more than this, “ If those, who took
 “ you in the Act of Adultery, and
 “ brought the Accusation against you,
 “ are gone, and do not think fit to
 “ carry you before the proper Magistrate;
 “ and if you have not hitherto
 “ had Sentence passed upon you by
 “ such a Magistrate, I have nothing
 “ to do to condemn you; *Go away, and sin no more.* And indeed this was all that was left for him to say or do in the present Case: For you are to remember, that only those that *saw* the Crime, and took her in it, could be the Accusers; now our Lord did not see the Act, of which she was guilty, and therefore had nothing to do to carry her himself before the Magistrate; her Accusers, who *did* see her, were gone, and therefore he could not deliver her back into *their* Hands; he was himself no Magistrate, and therefore could not, upon the Accusation laid before him, pass any Sentence, and for these Reasons, he bids her *go away, and*

John 8. 9.

and sin no more. As for his Answer to the Scribes and Pharisees that brought her, [*He that is without Sin amongst you, let him cast the first Stone at her,*] He al- Lightfoot, luded in that to a Tradition of the Jews, that the bitter Waters appointed by the Law, to try a Woman accused of Adultery, would have no Effect at all upon her (tho' she was really guilty) if the Husband, who accused her, was himself guilty of the like Crime. And therefore our Lord, who saw into the Consciences of the Scribes and Pharisees, that brought the Complaint against her, and had a Mind to expose their Hypocrisie (which he took all Opportunities to do) before the People, silenced them with this Retortion: For the * Rabbins and Doctors * Grotius *upon the Place, from the Talmudists and Josephus.* of the Law were themselves, at that time, for the most Part, a pack of lewd Adulterers. And accordingly, their own Conscience stinging them, they slunk out, one by one, from the eldest to the last, and left their Criminal to shift for her self. So that all you can gather from this Text, is, " That an Informer ought to be entirely clear (not from all Sin, for that's impossible, but) from *the same,* " or any other *as great and scandalous* " Of

“ Offence as that which he pretends
 “ to bring to Punishment: And this
 I readily grant you. I will acknow-
 ledge too, that it does by no Means
 become a Christian, *to delight in punish-*
ing: But the End of punishing is the
 Glory of God, and the Reformation
 of the Offender, and these we *are* to
 delight in as necessary Parts of Piety
 and Charity; tho’ we delight not in
 the *Means*, we must accept them in
 order to *the End*; and in so doing, we
 act but as the most good-natured Sur-
 geon, who, to preserve the Life of his
 Patient, finds it necessary to lay him
 under several painful Operations. So
 that tho’ we are not to be forward to
 bring Men to Punishment for the
 malicious Pleasure *of having them pu-*
nished; yet we must not scruple, even
 this severe and grating Employment,
 to obtain the Advantage of *having them*
reformed.

Objec^t. III.

Eul. But the Day of Judgment
 seems to be pointed at by our Savi-
 our, as the only proper Time for pu-
 nishing all such Wickedness as does
 not immediately affect the public In-
 terest. In the Parable of *the Tares*, that
 grew up together with the Wheat,
 our Lord, under the Person of the
 Ma-

Master of the Field, when his Servants desired Leave to go and pluck them up, determines against it; --- *Let both grow together till the Harvest, and at the time of Harvest I will say to the Reapers, gather together first the Tares, and bind them in Bundles to burn them, but gather the Wheat into my Barns.* This seems to me a plain Indication, that he reserves the Punishment of them to another World. Matt. 13. 30.

Phil. The Wheat in this Parable signifies, as our Lord himself explains it, *the Children of the Kingdom*, i. e. the true Members of the Christian Church; the Tares, *the Children of the Devil*, i. e. such as, professing Christianity, do either corrupt it by Heretical Doctrines, or disgrace it by a vicious Life. And such a Mixture indeed we are to expect (thro' the Malice of the Devil, and the Corruption of humane Nature) to the End of the World. The Day of Judgment is a Time, when (tho' all our present Endeavours fail) there shall be a Separation made betwixt them by the great Judge of all Men; the Wicked shall be then turned into Hell for their eternal Punishment; the Righteous shall be taken up to Heaven, and fixed in an everlasting State of Purity

Purity and Perfection. But all Interpreters are agreed, that this does not in the least discharge the Magistrate from punishing Wickedness (according to the 13th Chapter to the *Romans*,) nor the Church from excommunicating notorious Sinners, (according to the 5th Chapter of the 1 *Corinth*.) for the Scriptures, being endited by one and the same infallible Spirit of Truth, can never contradict themselves. To set the Parable in a clear Light, you are to observe, (1) That it speaks not against *suppressing the Offence*, but **ROOT-ING OUT the OFFENDER**. The Tares are **THE CHILDREN** of the wicked One, and **THEY** that **DO Iniquity**: These, the Servants, were for *gathering and rooting up*; i. e. they were for cutting off *the Persons* of Offenders, to clear the Church from them once for all, by Fire, and Sword, and Persecution; but this our Lord forbids them, as he did the Apostles, who would have called for Fire from Heaven upon the *Samaritans*. The final Destruction of wicked Men is reserved to the Day of Judgment, when God himself will execute Vengeance upon them, if they prevent it not by a timely Repentance; and the Reason why he reserves

Matt. 13. 38,
41.

Ver. 28. 29.

serves them till then, is *in Hopes* of their Repentance; and therefore he ^{2 Pet. 3. 9.} will not allow *us* in an unseasonable and uncharitable Zeal to root them out before. But this is altogether a different Case from Punishments inflicted by the Magistrate upon an Offender, *to promote* his Reformation and Amendment, as much as the Gallows differ from a Penalty of Ten or Twenty Shillings. In these the Offender is *not cut off, not rooted out*, nor any thing like it, but reserved for Repentance; and his Punishment is not so much design'd to revenge his past Offence, as to fright him from offending any more. You are (2) to observe, That *the Rooting up* which is here forbidden, is ^{Matt. 13. 29.} *such a rooting up* as may endanger the GOOD as well as *the Bad*, --- *lest while ye gather the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them.* Now what Danger is there that a good Man should be rooted up, when his wicked Neighbour is brought to pay for Swearing or Drunkenness? This therefore forbids us *to take up Arms and make War* upon a Nation, either for Heresie or Immorality; because in the Confusion of such desperate Courses, many orthodox Christians, and many virtuous and good Men

Men are like to suffer as well as the Heretical and the Bad ; for the Sword will make no Difference. In short, I will sum up the Meaning of this Text in an excellent Annotation of the *Rhemists* upon it. “ The Good must
 “ tolerate the Evil, when it is so strong
 “ that it cannot be redressed without
 “ Danger or Disturbance of the
 “ whole Church, and commit the
 “ Matter to God’s Judgment in the
 “ latter Day. Otherwise, where ill
 “ Men (be they Heretics or other
 “ Malefactors) may be punished or
 “ suppressed without Disturbance and
 “ Hazard of the Good, they may
 “ and ought, by public Authority,
 “ either Spiritual or Temporal, to be
 “ chastised.

Eul. After all, I’m afraid this Scheme of your’s *will do no Good*. This informing seems to be as useless and ineffectual a Method as any of those which I proposed, and you disallowed before.

Phil. Pray give me your Reasons.

Object. IV.

Eul. Why, I think it will rather *provoke* Men, and *make them worse*, than reform them.

See Part I. p.
79, &c. 2d.
Edit.

Phil. Perhaps they may for a while be provoked ; but if their Punishment drive

drive them to Consideration, as it naturally tends to do, they will at length be sensible of the Charity and good Meaning of it, when Passion's laid, and the present Heat of their Resentments over. This I know to be true by Experience. But suppose they still continue to resent it, *we* must nevertheless do *our* Duty, tho' it should not have the desired Effect ; and 'tis to be hoped, their Punishment will be a *Warning to others*, if they will take no Warning by it themselves. As to their *growing worse*, you must excuse me if I can't believe that Men, who are grown to Years, and the Use of Reason, will pretend to struggle with or bid Defiance to the Law that punishes them, or repeat the Offence more outrageously, that they may be the oftener punished. This is a silly Sturdiness that none but *Children* would be guilty of, and yet we are commanded to *correct* our *Children* for all that.

Eul. We talk of *Reformation* as we do of Sieges and Battles ; Designs are form'd, the Enemy's routed, and Towns are taken, with a great deal of Ease, over a News-paper : But Armies in the Field, and in the Trenches, find a Thousand Difficulties in the Execution,

Object. V.

ecution, that we know nothing of. Vice is got to *such a Head*, and is so much countenanced by *Men of Estates and Power* in the Country, that I'm afraid this will not be a proper time to attack it. And this is a second Reason why I believe we shall do little Good that way.

Phil. If Vice be so extreamly flourishing as you say, *now* is, of all other, the most *necessary* time to check it. If not, *how long* are we to wait? When *will it* be a proper Season? The longer it continues uncontrolled, the more Strength it gathers, and the more difficult it will be still to conquer. If you will at all attempt it, it must be *now*, except you will sit still, and see your Country utterly ruined by triumphant and prevailing Wickedness, and tamely expect the Judgments and fiery Indignation of God to devour us. Is the Greatness of our Danger an Argument that we should do the less for our Preservation? Should we not rather bestir our selves with the more resolute Courage, Constancy, and Application? If Vice be encouraged and protected by great Men, *does not he that is higher than the highest regard it, and are there not higher than they?* We may

Eccles. 5. 8.

may expect to fail indeed, if we go out, in our own Strength: But if, with *David*, we attacque this *Goliath*, this mighty Power and Combination of wicked Men, *in the Name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel whom they have defied*, perhaps a simple Sling may do more than all the Swords, and Staves, and Shields of Wickedness can do. Come, Sir, let us not distrust God: Let us do our Endeavour, and leave the Event to him. If the *Enemies* of Virtue be numerous and united, let the *Friends* of Virtue, tho' not so numerous, be at least united; and if God be on our Side, let us not fear what Man can do against us. Let us remember, that the *Apostles* persisted with undaunted Courage to defend Christianity, tho' it was then every where spoken against; that *John* the Baptist did not forbear his Warnings and Reproofs, tho' encompassed about with a Generation of *Vipers*; that *Noah*, when all *Flesh* had corrupted themselves, continued still a zealous Preacher of Righteousness; that, when the Altars of God were throwing down, and the People were slaying his Prophets, even then was *Elijah* exceeding jealous for the Lord God of

1 Sam. 17. 45.

Dr. Butler's
Reform. Ser.
p. 24.

of Hosts; and when the Jews were at the highest Pitch of Iniquity, a sinful Nation, and enraged at all that would oppose their Wickedness, *the holy Prophets* zealously set themselves to reform that scandalous Corruption, both in Worship and Manners. And is not reforming the Lives of Men as good and necessary a Work as ever? Consider the Curse of Meroz, *because they came not to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty*; and consider too that *the Eyes of the Lord run too and fro thro' the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose Heart is perfect towards him.* And consider, lastly, that if *the Law* cannot stem this Flood of Wickedness, it is much less likely that your milder Methods should. But, Sir, there is a secret MAJESTY in LAW, (as God has stamp'd the Image of his own Authority upon it,) which will have its Influence, and which the proudest, greatest Friends of Vice dare not directly, or very long oppose.

Eulabes was about to reply, when *Choristus*, a neighbouring Dissenter, came into the Garden, and join'd them. After the first Addresses of Civility were over, the Discourse went on, and *Choristus*, who wish'd well

well to the Suppression of Vice, (tho' he had his particular Scruples as to this way of doing it,) hearkned to them very attentively, being first let into the Merits of the Cause which was then in debate by *Philaretus*.

Now, Sir, give me leave, said *Eulabes*, to add another Reason why your Project will be of little Use. The Penalties are so very small, in Cases of Immorality and Prophaneness, that a Man of Figure and Estate, whose Example in Vice is most mischievous, will not be at all affected by them. Object. VI.

Phil. The Penalties, it's true, are very small, and much below the Offence: But the Providence of God and the Wisdom of our Parliaments foresaw that Laws against Vice were likely at best to be but slowly executed, and therefore they were not to be clog'd with severe and heavy Fines, which would have rendered the Execution of them still more difficult, and left Men under fairer Pretences for being remiss and negligent in it, and given more plausible Ground than now 'tis possible they can have to cry out of *Hardships*, and to accuse them of want of *Mercy* and *Moderation*. I could wish indeed, that there had been

a little more Variety in the Sums to be levied for these Offences; for Instance, that a Gentleman of Two or Three Hundred Pounds *per Annum*, should pay a *Crown* for every Oath or Curse, and Twenty Shillings for being Drunk; and so proportionably more, according to the different Rank and Estate of the Offender. But the Laws are made to our Hands by those that have the proper Authority, and 'tis *our* Duty to obey and see them executed; applying to this what St. *James* says upon another Occasion, *If thou judge the Law, thou art not a Doer of the Law, but a Judge.* Neither let us despair of the Effect of legal Punishments, even upon Persons of Rank. For as we are to suppose, that the Education of Gentlemen supplies them with a Quickness of Reasoning and Apprehension above others, or with a nicer Sense of Honour and Disgrace, we may hope that when they are awakened by the *Discountenance of the Law*, tho' not by the *Greatness of the Penalty*, it may work them into some Reflexions, which, by the Grace of God, may turn to good Account. But suppose, after all, that it should not; the Number of poor and ordinary Peo-

James. 4. 11.

People is much greater than that of the Rich; and if we can hope to reform the *main Body* of the Nation, or of our own Neighbourhood, is it not Pity we should suffer *them* to go to Hell, in Complaisance to a few *vicious Gentlemen*?

Eul. For my Part, I believe the Laws against Immorality and Prophaneness were never *made* to punish *Gentlemen*; if they had, the Penalties would have been better proportioned to their Fortunes.

Phil. Excuse me, Sir; I can never think, that the solemn Prefaces that usher in those Acts, as that ---- *ALL* ^{21 Jac. 1. c.} *prophane Swearing and Cursing are forbid-* ^{20.} *den by the Word of God, and are to be look'd upon as detestable Sins; ---- the* ^{6 & 7 W. 3.} *odious and loathsome Sin of Drunkenness,* ^{c. 11.} *the Root and Foundation of many other* ^{4 Jac. 1. c. 5.} *enormous Sins, as Bloodshed, Stabbing, &c. to the great Dishonour of God and of our Nation; ----* I say, I can never think that these solemn Preambles, which express so just a Detestation of Swearing and Drunkenness in general, should be followed by Acts that intend only to reach the poorer sort; that our Parliament could imagine that the Word of God has forbid

Swearing and Curfing to the common People, and allowed them to *Gentlemen*; that they are detestable in the Poor, and pardonable in the Rich; that Drunkenness in a Man of Quality is not as odious and loathsome as in a Plowman or Mechanic; that it is not as great a Dishonour to God and to our Nation in the one, as in the other; or that it is not equally the Cause of many Mischiefs and many Vices in them both. Now if *the Reason* of the Law, given by the Lawgivers themselves, extend alike to all Ranks and Qualities, pray, why shall we distinguish away the *Force* of the Law, to oblige the Vices of the Gentry? especially since, as you observed, their Example is most of all mischievous.

Eul. Well, but to return to the Debate, whether your Method is likely to do Good. I must tell you, I am no Stranger to these Attempts in other Places, and if (as in all likelihood they will) things be managed here, as they have been there, the Project will turn to very little Advantage. To what Purpose should we give Trouble to the Justices, and to our selves in this Matter, when the *Constable*, who
is

is the immediate Officer concerned in the Punishment, shall *evade his Warrant*, and never give it due Execution? either by neglecting it altogether, or by returning the Money back again to the Offender; or by setting him in the Stocks, when he has Goods sufficient for a Distress, and is very well able to pay; or by setting him there early in the Morning, or late at Night, to skreen him from the View of Company, and the Sense of Shame; or supplying him with Drink in the very Stocks, till he repeat the Offence of Drunkenness there, for which he was commanded thither. Now I appeal to you, if this be not to defeat all the Ends of Punishment?

Phil. Aye, but if the Constable do thus, he is liable himself to be severely punished. Let the Justice of Peace that granted the Warrant, be informed of these Abuses, and he will find a way to cure them. For as *any thing* done in *Contempt* of the Magistrate's Authority, or designedly to *discourage* the Execution of the Queen's Laws, and *any Neglect* of subordinate Officers in their Duty, is an Offence for which the guilty Person may and ought to be *bound to the Behaviour*, indicted in Sessi-

on, and fined at the Pleasure of the Court: So, *in some particular Cases*, there are particular and stated Penalties that may be levied *by Warrant* upon

1 *Jac. 1. c. 9.* him. If the Constable or Churchwarden do not levy, according to his Precept, upon *Tippling-Houses*, for Disorders committed there, he forfeits Forty Shillings, or must be sent to Goal; and if he does not levy the Five Shillings for Drunkenness, where the
4 *Jac. 1. c. 5.* Offender has *any Goods*, to that Value, that may be distrained upon, or does not (where no Distress can be taken) fet him duly and *publicly* in the Stocks, as his Warrant directs him, he must pay Ten Shillings himself.

Object. VIII. *Choristus*, Let Justices of Peace, and Constables, and Informers do what they can, 'tis my Opinion, little will be done to Purpose, so long as *the Church* does not sufficiently discourage vicious Men by throwing them out of her Communion; and the Clergy, instead of *joining with Reformers*, *oppose*, and *cry them down*, and chuse their favourite Companions from that very Set of Men which you are proposing to reform. What will these care for the Laws of the State, when, notwithstanding

standing all their Vices, they still find Countenance from the Church?

Phil. What do you mean, *Choristus*, by this peevish Objection? If it be that *the Constitutions of our Church* allow of wicked Men in our Communion, you are exceedingly mistaken; for they * are expresse and full to the contrary. And so they are against the particular Sins which we speak of punishing; as *Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, absenting from the public Services of Religion, and all Lewdness, Drunkenness, and prophane Swearing.* Church-wardens are bound to present such Offenders, that they may be punished; and if *they* neglect, the Minister himself may present them. If you think the Church has not sufficiently obliged her Clergy to be aiding and assisting to us in all Designs for Reformation, look into the 113th Canon, where Ministers are expressly declared to be *the Persons that should have the CHIEF CARE for the Suppressing of Sin and Impiety in their Parishes.* And accordingly our present excellent Arch-Bishop, in his circular Letter to the Bishops of his Province 1699, very earnestly exhorts the Clergy to the greatest Diligence in “ putting a Stop to the Growth of

* See Canon 26. and the 2d Rubric before the Communion Office.

Can. 13.

Can. 90.

Can. 109.

Can. 113.

Can. 113.

Par. 4.

“ Vice and Prophaneness; to procure
 “ stated Meetings and Societies a-
 “ mongst themselves, inviting other
 “ pious Persons of the Laity to join
 “ with them, for the more vigorous
 “ carrying on of the Design of Re-
 “ formation of Manners; to inform
 “ against obstinate Offenders to the
 “ civil Magistrate; and to put the
 “ Laity in Mind, that *they* are obli-
 “ ged to do so too. So that if wick-
 ed Men be still received into our
 Communion, or if any of the Clergy
 do so wretchedly forget their Functi-
 on, as, instead of *promoting* Reforma-
 tion, to *oppose and cry it down*, the
 CHURCH is not to answer for it, *she*
 has expressly call'd them to other Mea-
 sures.

Par. 6.

Par. 7.

Chor. But if the *Church* is not to
 answer for it, the *Churchmen* are; and
 'tis against *them* that my Objection lies.

Phil. Against *some* of them, you
 mean, and I would hope, but *very*
few. Those that *do* set themselves to
 discourage and cry down the Execu-
 tion of the Laws against Vice, deserve
 a Name much harder than (from the
 respect I bear to their Cloth) I am
 willing to give them. 'Tis certain
 they act most shamefully contrary to
 the

the most *direct*, and *positive*, and *solemn* Obligations of their Function, and will have a *dreadful Account* to give to their great Lord and Master, and will be for the present some Discouragement to us, as well as a Scandal to *their Sacred Order*. But such ought to be complained of to the Bishop, and if his Admonitions or Discipline do not work upon them, we must leave them to the Judgment of God, and go on with *our Duty*, tho' they will not do *theirs*. For our Success does not *depend* upon Encouragement from them, but upon the Grace and Blessing of God, and the Force of Conscience in the Offender, awakened by the Authority of the Law in punishing; and these will not be so easily overborn as you imagine. And after all, *Choristus*, you must not make the Charge too *general*. We have (blessed be God) many excellent and worthy Persons of the Clergy, who have publicly shewn themselves zealous in this Cause, and *preached* before the Societies for Reformation at *London, Wexford, Nottingham, &c.* to encourage them, and many have been prevailed with to *print* their Sermons too, for exciting the Zeal of others; of which
when

when you are more at leifure I can show you feveral. Not now to infift upon the great Number of Bifhops and Dignitaries of the Church, as well as Clergymen, in a more private Station, that have appeared in the Pulpit and the Prefs on thefe Occafions; what think you of the large *Societies of Clergymen*, erected for thefe very Purpofes of Reformation in *Buckinghamfhire* and *Bedfordfhire*? What think you of the *Twenty* or *Thirty* of this Order who paid fuch a folemn Refpect to the Corps of *Mr. Dent*, lately murdered, for affifting in the Service of Reformation of Manners, as to attend him in Proceffion to his Grave? Are not thefe, who have owned this good Work fo openly, (and many, very many others, I don't queftion, there are, who think and fpeak well of it, and promote it, tho' they have not had the fame Opportunities of being publicly known) incontestible Inftances that the Clergy have *not*, in general, loft the Senfe they ought to have of their Duty to encourage it? *Some*, I am fenfible, have been and will be Enemies to it; but let *them* only bear their own Iniquity and the juft Reproach of it: I can affure you, Sir, they

they are no true Sons of the Church of *England*, but *monstrous* and *unnatural Productions*, and I heartily wish they were as rare to be met with.

Chor. For my Part, I must still de- *Object. IX.*
clare, that I think your legal Punishments will do no Good; Men will not be reform'd by them: For *Solomon* tells us, *Tho' thou shouldst bray the Fool in a Mortar, yet will not his Foolishness depart from him.* And since we are like to do them no Good this way, we had better let them alone. *Prov. 27. 22.*

Phil. Your Conclusion's wrong; for the same inspired Writer still declares, that *a Rod is for the Back of him that is void of Understanding.* Correction he ought to have, whether he will be better by it or no. Now the Fool which *Solomon* speaks of here, and in the Place which you cited, is an *obstinate hardened Offender*, whom I shall readily acknowledge, is not likely to be reclaimed; but 'tis a most censorious and uncharitable Spirit that will look upon *all* vicious Men as Persons *obstinate and finally hardened* in their Vices. Some, it's true, are so: But how shall we know which are they, till we have first tried whether Punishment will have its Effect or no? And if it have not

Prov. 10. 13.
--- 26. 3.

not at one time, perhaps it may at another, the Punishment being frequently repeated. If *many* Endeavours of this kind prove ineffectual, it will be Time enough *then* to give him up as incorrigible, and to leave him to the Judgment of the great Day.

Object. X.

Matt. 7. 6.

Eul. What say you then to that Text, where our Saviour says, *Cast not your Pearls before Swine, lest they turn again and rent you? -----*

Amos 5. 13.

Chor. --- And to that of the Prophet *Amos*, where speaking of the Obstinacy of wicked Men, and the general Corruption of Manners, he concludes, *Therefore the Prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil Time?*

Phil. Why, I think they are nothing to your Purpose; for neither of them relate at all to the *Punishment* of wicked Men, or speak against *informing* of them to the Magistrate, but against exposing our selves to hazard by throwing away *pious Admonition* and *Reproof* upon outrageous and desperate Offenders. Therefore the Inference which may naturally be drawn from that Text in *St. Matthew*, should be, “ That such as will
“ not mend upon Reproof, or are not
“ likely to be the better for it, are *no longer*
“ *to be reprov'd, but inform'd against,*
“ and

“ and delivered up to the severer
 “ Methods of *the Law*. Your other
 Text in *Amos* is exactly parallel ; “ The
 “ prudent good Man, finding it to
 “ no Purpose to reprove, thro’ the
 “ head-strong Impudence of Vice,
 “ shall KEEP SILENCE, left in-
 “ stead of doing Good, he should only
 “ draw some Violence upon himself.
 But if you will have this *keeping Silence*
 to relate to *informing*, it will still do
 you little Service ; for by the Verse
 before, you will perceive, that the
 Jewish Magistrates were then *all* of
 them so very corrupt, that a good
 Man could hope for no Countenance
 from them, if he went upon that Er-
 rand, (which, I hope, is not our Case ;)
 and therefore Prudence and Necessi-
 ty would both oblige him to sit still ;
 nor is it any Wonder that the Pro-
 phet should advise him so to do.

Eul. Well, *Philaretus*, I’m not yet
 satisfied, that informing will be to any
 Purpose : For look abroad into those
 Places where it has been used, and *object. XI.*
 tell me *what Good* it ever *has done*. Is
 not the World as wicked as it was?

Phil. No, Sir ; not *that Part* of the
 World where the Laws against Pro-
 phaneness and Debauchery have been
 vi-

vigorously executed ; and if the *rest* be still as wicked as before, 'tis owing to those cold and careless Christians that live amongst them, and have neither the Zeal, the Courage, nor the Charity to inform against Wickedness, and have it punished. Sir, I can assure you, by Experience, in a Country which I very well know, (I mean those parts of it where Informations have been duly given, and the Law has exerted its Authority against Vice,) that *Swearing, Cursing, and Drunkenness*, were notoriously and visibly abated ; several particular Persons, who were punished, have acknowledged it has done them Good ; Prophaneness and Debauchery began to hide themselves in Corners, were actually upon the Retreat, and in a fair way to be thoroughly routed ; and all this in the Compass of less than a Year ; till many of those who had given Informations began to hearken to Discouragements, to slacken in their Zeal, and basely to desert the Service, and foolishly to leave a Victory that was almost in their Hands. Then, indeed, Vice returned with greater Rampancy and Appetite ; and who can wonder, that the Enemy should rally again and fall on with fresh

fresh Fury when they find their Conquerors unexpectedly retire before them? But in other Places it is still considerably over-awed in several Instances; and therefore what can we conclude, but that if the Friends of Virtue had continued still to prosecute Vice with the same heroic Resolution they at first began with, the Heat of the Battle would have been quickly over in a glorious Conquest? Now if the Practice of informing *has* done Good, and *would have done much more*, if it had been vigorously continued, you must allow me this Experience as one plain and certain Argument that it *may* do Good.

Arg. I. That the punishing of Vice may do much Good.

Chor. And you must allow me on the other Side, one plain Observation, upon the Experience you talk of, that the Good it does is only upon the *outward Behaviour*, and that is merely over-awed by the Fear of Punishment for a-while, and when they are relieved from that Fear, they return with the Dog to his Vomit. So that it only makes a parcel of *Hypocrites* at best.

Object. XII.

Phil. If it does, Men had better sin with Modesty and Reserve, than open Impudence. Don't mistake me;

me; I offer nothing in behalf of Hypocrisie, which is a detestable Sin; but I say, that Vice, when it is private and retired, is not attended with those *provoking Circumstances*, as when it revels in your Streets, and in your Markets, and bids Defiance to God and Religion, in the Face of open Day. But to clear this Matter once for all, I will give you the rest of my Arguments (as I have already laid down one) to prove how *useful* these Attempts for Reformation may be, and that they really *may do a great deal of Good*.

Chor. Aye, pray Sir, do; I shall be glad to be thoroughly satisfied in that Point.

Arg. II.

*See Essay, Pt.
I. p. 51. (2d
Edit.)*

Phil. Suppose then that this Reformation extend it self only to the *outward Behaviour*, and do not lead the Offender to an inward Hatred of his Sin, and to a true Repentance; yet I must tell you, 'tis a great Advantage to have him curb'd thus far as it is a PUBLIC HONOUR done to Religion and Virtue to stop the outrageous Impudence of Sin, and by the Authority of the Magistrate, and the pious Industry of good Christians, to support the Reputation of good Manners, and
re-

reduce the World to something of that *Decency* at least that becomes the Professors of the Christian Faith. It will be a standing Testimony, that the true Spirit of our Religion abhors all sort of Debauchery and Wickedness when they are suppressed as far as is possible to be done by Law, and good Men enter their public Protest against them, by bringing them to Punishment.

And this may preserve the Nation *Arg. III.*

from *those heavy Judgments of God* that follow open and uncontrolled Wickedness; an Advantage upon which we ought to lay the *greatest Stress imaginable*. For when the public Authority does what it can to suppress Impiety, and we give all the Assistance we are able to public Authority in so doing, we may reasonably hope, that God will not impute that Wickedness to *the Nation*, but punish it only in the Persons of the Offenders. Or if public Calamities should still be sent upon our Country, perhaps the good Providence of God would find a way to exempt such from any Share in the *Suffering*, as are able to answer it to Him and their own Consciences that they have done their utmost to suppress *the Sins* that drew it on. And

See Essay,
Part I. p. 25,
26, &c. and
Pref. to that
Part, p. vi, vii.
2d Edit.

Ezek. 33. 1--
10.

whether they be, or be not exempted, they shall not fall under *the Wrath of God* that accompanies those Judgments; they will have the Support of a good Conscience, when they consider, that they are not owing to any Sloth or Negligence of their's, but that *they* did their best to prevent them.

Arg. IV.

Another Argument will be, that suppose the Offenders to be rather *restrain'd* than *reformed* by Punishment, yet it must be some Advantage to *them*, as by this Restraint they will have *the fewer Sins to answer for*; and it will be some good Omen that our Country is on the mending Hand, when the Number of Offences is *lessened*. How many drunken Debauches, how many Thousands of prophane Oaths and Curses are prevented by the vigorous Execution of the Laws even for half a Year! much more, if the Vigour of informing and punishing, continue regular and constant for any Number of Years! If it be (as I am sure it ought to be) the *Practice* of Swearing, Drunkenness, Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, &c. that we desire to see suppress'd; shall we not account it a happy Progress, when we find them notoriously *abated*? Shall we blame
that

that Method as *useless*, and say, *It does no Good*, which has apparently driven Vice from its Outworks, and the Town, and keeps it closely blocked up in the Citadel?

I will add in the next Place, that (still supposing what you say of outward Restraint only,) it will do a great deal of Good by *stopping the Infection of ill Examples of Wickedness, and removing Temptations out of the Way*. The fewer Offences are publicly committed, the fewer ill Examples there will be to draw on others to those Sins which perhaps they would never have been guilty of, if they had not perceived them *fashionable, popular and common*; and I hope you will not account this a Trifle in the Design of Reformation.

Arg. V.

See Essay, Pt. I. Pref. p. xvii, &c.

It gives a considerable Advantage too, towards securing the Virtue of the next Generation, suppose it should not have all the desired Effect upon the present Age. Children, whose tender Minds are naturally more afraid of Punishment than grown Persons are, will, by seeing their Parents and their Neighbours frequently under the Hands of the Constable, for Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness, &c. be

Arg. VI.

brought to entertain a very early and a very happy Abhorrence of these Vices, a Reverence for the Authority of the Law, and deep Impressions, and constant Expectations of Punishment, if they commit the same Offences; and when they grow up to Years, they will be the less in Danger of being drawn aside to Vice, as they will find those Practices (thro' a long and customary Execution of the Laws) already put out of Countenance, and vicious Examples become scarce and private, and themselves delivered from many Thousands of Temptations and Opportunities of being wicked, which they would otherwise have had.

These last five Arguments, *Choristus*, have run upon your own Supposition (which yet I do not grant you) that the Reformation would be only *outward* and *pretended*: But I have shown, that, even in *that* Case, we have Room to hope for a great deal of Good from our Endeavours. Perhaps, upon a little more Reflexion, you may be satisfied, that a *real* and *inward* Reformation of the Offender is not to be despaired of from the same Means, which seem however to lay him fairly in the way for it.

For

For Punishment is such a Check in *Arg. VII.* the Career of Wickedness, as naturally tends to bring him to *Consideration of his Fault*, and that, by the Grace of God, may lead him to Repentance and Amendment. *Reproofs alone* are apt to be slighted, and set upon the Score of ill Humour, Affectation, or something else: But Punishment carries in it the Majesty of Law, wherein Five or Six Hundred Persons of the best Rank and Quality, the collective Wisdom of the whole Nation in Parliament, brand his Practice as a Crime, and touching him to the quick with a sensible Forfeiture for it, strikes with more Authority, will be longer remembered, and have a greater Influence.

See more at
large in Essay,
Part I. p. 49,
&c. 2d Edit.

Again, 'tis to be considered, that *Arg. VIII.* *Habits of Sin*, however prevalent before, do gradually lose their Strength by Restraint. Custom is a second Nature, and has a mighty Force: But all this Force is owing to frequent and repeated Exercise, which obstinately suppressed, the Force of Custom is destroyed. To instance in *prophane Swearing*; tye it down from Exercise, either by Fear, or Shame, or any other Principle; and the longer it is thus stifled,

the less Temptation a Person finds in himself to be guilty of it. The Habit wears off by Disuse, and Inclination its self dies away with the Habit, and then the Man has both Time and Will to consider all that he hears said against it. So in *Drunkenness*; the frequent Practice of this introduces and inflames that Thirst of strong Liquors which draws him on again to repeat the Crime: Thus Drunkenness creating Thirst, and Thirst Drunkenness, the wretched Slave goes on from Day to Day in a perpetual Round of Appetite and Excess. Now if, by Fear of Punishment, you can oblige him to keep sober for some Time, tho' against his Will, you cure that unnatural and distempered *Thirst*, which has hitherto been inflamed by Drinking; and taking away that Thirst, you take away his *Inclination* to Excess; as well as leave him under the Government of cool Reflexions, which, by the Grace of God, may work effectually upon him. But then I presuppose a vigorous *Continuance* of the Authority of the Laws in punishing, and of the Care and Charity of good Men, in bringing such Offenders to Punishment; for a few sudden Starts of Zeal, the short
and

and imperfect Attempts of Reformation, which we have somewhere seen, do indeed very little Good this way; because so soon as the Restraint is again taken off (especially if it has continued but a little while) by Negligence in this good Work, Imitation and the Force of corrupt Nature brings those ill Habits again in Triumph upon the Stage, which, by a persevering Diligence, and a strict Hand over them, might have been totally suppressed.

Another Argument of the Service *Arg. IX.* we may do towards a real Reformation of Offenders, is, that the Hindring of them from prophaning the Lord's-Day by Sports and Pastimes, and the Exercise of Trades and worldly Business, may very probably drive them to Church, to Retirement, and religious Reading, which you will own may have a happy Influence. When they are not suffered to mispend those sacred Hours in Diversion, Drinking, or secular Employments, the next Thought that naturally occurs to them, is, *How they shall dispose of their Time.* And this their own Consciences will readily answer, by putting them in Mind to apply themselves to

the proper Purposes of the Day ; and finding themselves driven from every thing else, Religion will return upon them ; they will have nothing to do but to attend the public Worship of God ; and when they come Home, to take up their Bibles, or some other good Book, and read either alone, or to their Families, or both ; and this, methinks, is a fair Step to keep alive the Force of Conscience, the Sense of their Duty, and the Thoughts of another World ; and lays them directly in the Way to Repentance and a better Life. I don't say, that all Persons *will certainly* thus employ their vacant Time ; but 'tis reasonably to be hoped the Generality will, and 'tis very natural that they should.

Arg. X.

I will suppose further, as another Argument, that Informations may do Good, that if the Offender himself should prove obstinate and unreformed after all, yet his Punishment may serve *to deter others* from offending, who have not yet been punished. The Design of punishing is not only to reclaim that Person who then falls under the just Severity of the Law, but to be a Terror and Warning to others, who are, or have been, or are in-

inclined to be guilty of the same Crime. And that it is likely to be effectual this way, I need only put you in Mind of what the holy Spirit of God delivered by the wisest of Men, *Smite a Scorner, and the Simple will beware.* So that were the Offender himself as much a hardned Reprobate as the most uncharitable Thought can suppose him, yet 'tis well worth our while to have him punished, for a *general Warning to his Neighbourhood*, who, if they have any Wisdom left, will keep at Distance from a Rock whereupon they see another dashed before their Eyes.

Prov. 19. 25.
—— 21. 11.

And *lastly*, to conclude (as I began) *Arg. XI.* with an Observation upon Matter of Fact, look abroad into the World, into those Places where this Method of Reformation has been set up, and observe the *Opposition* it meets with, and *who they are* that oppose it. The whole Powers of Wickedness set themselves against it, such as hate to be reformed unanimously cry it down. And whence can this be, do you think, but that they are sensible, if this Method goes on, it *will* part them and their beloved Vices; it *will* oblige them to a Life of Sobriety, Modesty, and

and Gravity, which they have not been used to, and know not how to relish, and in short, *will* make them better Men than they desire to be? Why is it that the Devil, that irreconcilable Enemy to all Goodness and Reformation, that politic and wicked Spirit, *whose they are, and whom they serve*, so industriously arms and furiously leads them on to oppose it, but that he is fully satisfied it may give a terrible Shock to his Kingdom; and if it be faithfully used and continued, is like to meet with a Success *in reforming*, which will undo his malicious Interest *in destroying of Mankind*? If it would have no Effect this Way, the Devil would never concern himself against it; if wicked Men could hope still to enjoy their Vices in spite of it, they would never set up such a general Outcry (both those that *are*, and those that *are not yet* punished) to discourage it. Let any of them be indicted, and fined for *other* Misdemeanours (as Trespasses, Batteries, &c.) that fall within the Censure of the Law, and tho' the Offender himself perhaps will murmur and bear some Grudge against his Prosecutor, yet the *whole Gang* of Wickedness don't concern

cern themselves for him, and perhaps the Bill shall be found against him readily enough by a Jury not at all more virtuous than himself. But let him be punished for *Swearing, Drunkenness, &c.* the whole Neighbourhood takes the Alarm, the Country rings of it, and all the Swearers and Drunkards round about agree, to curse the Informer, and reproach the Justice. And why all this, but because it touches their common Interest, and they foresee it will in Time break the Neck of their Vices? Now certainly, Gentlemen, if the *Enemies of God and Goodness* are A F R A I D of this Method, as it's plain they are, the *Friends of Virtue and Religion* should be F O N D O F I T, as the likeliest way to root out Vice and Prophane-ness; and from this I hope you will allow me to argue, that *it may do a great deal of Good.*

Eul. We will dispute that Point no further; 'tis to be owned the Practice *may* do Good, tho' I think 'tis still to be feared *it will not.*

Phil. That neither you nor I can tell, and therefore it can be no Objection. If it may *possibly*, or however *probably* do Good, 'tis Argument enough

nough for us to use it; and as we are not able *to command Success*, (for that is only in the Hands of God,) we shall not be called to answer for *the Want of it*.

Objecⁿ. XIII. *Eul.* If the thing could be done with any tolerable Credit, or without intolerable Disgrace, I should not be averse to join in it; but you know how *scandalous* the Name of an Informer has always been; how *odious* to the People, and not without some Discountenance and Brand even *from our Laws themselves* in several Statutes.

Phil. How! If our Laws discourage the giving of Informations upon them, I'm sure they effectually weaken and destroy themselves. For without such Assistance (except the Magistrate's Eyes and Ears could be every where, as it's certain they cannot,) the Laws would be absolute Ciphers, and could never be executed to any Purpose, so as to break the Practices they are made against. As to the Statutes which you seem to refer to, you will easily get off from that Difficulty, when you consider the true State of the Case. 'Tis to be remembered, that the Wisdom of our ancient (as well as of some modern) Parliaments fore-

foreseeing, that all the Strength of good Laws consists in the Execution of them, that the Execution almost altogether depends upon Informations given to the proper Magistrate of the Breach of such Laws, and that the general good Nature of our Countrymen renders them usually backward in bringing Offenders to Punishment, especially where the Offence does not immediately touch their own personal and private Interest, took Care to give *particular Encouragement* to such as should inform, by assigning them one half of the Penalty upon Conviction; which Moiety was to be sued for by Bill, Plaint, or Information, in the public Courts of Justice. This Encouragement, in Process of Time, came to be very much abused, to the great Oppression of the Subject, by a sort of Men, who made it their Business to inspect, and pry into, and inform against such Offences, for the Sake of their Share in the Penalty (which in some Cases was very high, amounting to Ten, Twenty, Thirty, and perhaps a Hundred Pounds or more;) and this also managed in such an expensive, troublesome way to the Defendant, as often obliged him to compound

Lord Bacon's
Hist. of King
Hen. VII. p.
211.

18 Eliz. c. 5.

pound with the Informer for a considerable Sum, and then the Prosecution was dropp'd. These Practices became most notorious toward the latter End of the Reign of *Henry VII.* who, to fill his *Exchequer*, scrupled not to encourage them; for the King was to have his Moiety, and the Informer his. *Empson* and *Dudley*, his two hateful Instruments of Oppression, beside several other ways of extorting Money for their Master, set *this* on Foot, laid hold on all the obsolete Penal-Laws, and had every where their Spies abroad, to bring in Informations upon them, and by that Means heaped up in a very few Years a prodigious Treasure for the King, and not a little ('tis to be supposed) for themselves and their Agents. Notwithstanding the just Severity against them in the Reign of *Henry VIII.* these ill Humours, being once stirred up, were not so easily laid again; covetous and unworthy Minds, having learn't the way of growing rich by the Sufferings of others, tho' not employed for the Government, traded for themselves. Therefore in 18 *Eliz.* an Act was made *to redress Disorders in common Informers*, yet withal (as the Preamble goes

goes on) *for the better Execution of Penal Laws*, so jealous was the Parliament of breaking in upon the Sanction, or discouraging the Execution of their Laws, even at the same time that they were sensible of the Mischief of those covetous Promoters, that they did not offer (as with very good Colour they might have done) to repeal in all those Statutes the Clause of the Informer's Moiety, but only set themselves to redress Abuses and Oppressions in the Prosecution. 31 Eliz. another Statute was made for this Purpose, 21 Jac. 1. another, and 4 and 5 W. and M. another: But all these were still only to prevent the *Hardships*, and to bridle the *Malice* of Informations; not to clap a general Brand upon all informing. The Informers therefore against whom our Acts are levell'd, and who, (I grant you) were deservedly odious, are thus to be described.

31 Eliz. c. 5.
21 Jac. 1. c. 4.
4 & 5 W. & M. c. 18.

In the first Place, they were such as *got Money by it*, and prosecuted not for the Love of Justice, for any Reverence to the Laws, or any Concern for the public Benefit of their Country, but to raise and improve their own Fortunes at the Expence of other Mens. 2. They were *common Informers*,

I

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Co. Inst. Pt. IV. c. 7. p. 76. *mers*, that made a particular *Trade* of it, and left their other lawful *Business* and Occupations to follow it. (3.)

3.

The *Offences*, upon which their Prosecutions were grounded, were generally *trifling* and *small*, in Comparison with the Breach of our Laws against Immorality and Prophaneness: As concerning the Prices of Poultry, Hats and Caps, Broad-Cloth, Wax-Candles, Wines, Hay and Oats, &c. concerning the Carriage of Tin to *Calice*, the making Pattens of *Asp*, the Decay of Houses and Enclosures, the keeping of great Horses, the making of Rings, Crosses, and Locks; the Importation of Foreign Coin, and Twenty other Matters of this kind.

Co. Inst. Pt. III. c. 88. p. 192.

4.

Co. Inst. ibid. It is next to be taken Notice of, that they affected to rake up *old* and *obsolete* Laws, which had for a long time been laid aside, and were unknown to the People, and took Advantage of the Ignorance of the Offender to catch at his Offence, without allowing for the different Circumstances of Times, which very often make a Law to be highly inconvenient, or it may be prejudicial to the Nation in one Age, tho' Two or Three Ages before it was as highly necessary and convenient.

ent. Again, (5.) when they had fastened upon an Offence, they drew the Person offending into the Courts at *Westminster-Hall*, perhaps from the farthest Parts of the Kingdom, or laid their Information in some *strange County*, where neither themselves nor the Offender were known to the Jury that was to try the Fact; to the great Trouble, Charge, and Damage of the Defendant: And when they had him there, would sometimes *compound the Matter* with him for a Sum of Money, and so let fall the Prosecution; by which Means the Informer secured *his own* Share of the Penalty, or more, and left the King without a Remedy for *his*. And *lastly*, they were such (as my Lord Coke describes them,) who, under Colour of Law, did vex and impoverish the Subject for *Malice*, as well as other private Ends. Now, Gentlemen, if you will compare the Informer here described, against whom our Acts were made, with those other Informers, whose Care is only to suppress Prophaneness and Vice, by putting the Laws in Execution, you will immediately be satisfied, that these latter, as they were never *designed* to be discouraged by our Laws, so

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5.
Co. Inst. Pt.
III. c. 88. p.
192.

See Preamble
of Stat. 21
Jac. 1. c. 4.

6.
Co. Inst. Pt.
II. c. 88. p.
194.

they do no way *deserve* it. For (1.) the Informer against Vice and Immorality *gets not a Farthing by it*. It's true indeed, the Statutes 3 Car. 1. c. 1. and 29 Car. 2. c. 7. *allow* the Magistrate to reward him, in some Cases of Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, with a Third Part of the Penalty; but that will amount to very little; for the Penalties are but Five Shillings, Six Shillings and Eight Pence, or (the highest of them) Twenty Shillings; nor have I hitherto been able to learn, by all the Enquiry I could make, that any such Informer (I speak of those who now act upon the Design of Reformation of Manners) ever received, or ever demanded that. (2.) Therefore this Informer makes *no Trade* of it; but, on the contrary, is at a voluntary Expence and Trouble, to prefer his Information for the public Good, and attends his other lawful Business with as much Industry and Honesty as other Men. Nor (3.) are the Offences which he brings to Punishment of a *trifling Nature and Importance*. I told you before, that Vice and Immorality are of the last ill Consequence to the Government, to the public Safety, and to the private Happiness

pineness of Mankind. Neither (4) are *the Laws* we have against them *obsolete, unknown, forgotten, or inconvenient*. Some of them are very late Statutes, almost all of them within a Hundred Years backward, and every one of them recommended afresh to a vigorous Execution, by Her Majesty's Proclamation; which Proclamation being ordered, by Authority, to be read Four Times in the Year, in every Church, as well as at every Quarter-Session, the People cannot pretend to be surprised in the Execution of them. And Vice, being always evil, must be always worthy to be suppressed; so that no Change of Times can abate the Mischief of it, or dissolve the Obligation we have to punish it. Then (5.) here is no such thing as chargeable and troublesome Prosecutions of Men in *Westminster-Hall*, or in other Courts and Counties far distant from them. The Information is given before a Justice of the Peace of the same County where the Offender lives; no need of tedious Attendance, seeing Lawyers, and paying Costs, but every thing done without any further Charge to him than the stated Penalty of the Law for his Offence. Nor is there

any such thing to be supposed as a Composition or Collusion betwixt the Informer and him, to evade the Law, or cheat the Poor, to whom the Forfeiture belongs: Should any thing of this kind be made appear, whoever that Informer be, I should be glad to see him punished. And (6.) I do as verily believe, that those who set themselves to inform against Vice, do it *not* out of *Malice*, or any other private and unworthy Ends, but from a serious Zeal for Religion, a public Spirit, and a sincere Charity to the Offender: If any do otherwise, let him bear his own Burden, and answer for it; but it is by no Means fair, that any Body of Men should lie under a general Imputation for the Villany of a few particular Persons who crowd in amongst them.

Chor. Sir, you have cleared that Point, so far as any Odium from the *Laws* was concerned in the Dispute; but you need not be again told, that the *common Opinion* has still made it every where reproachful and scandalous to turn Informer.

Phil. Nothing can be truly *scandalous*, but what is notoriously VICIOUS, or proceeds from a BASE and
DIS-

DISHONOURABLE Principle? Now let us examine this Business of informing against Vice, and we shall find it to be neither of these. To make it VICIOUS, it must either proceed from *personal Malice* against the Offender, or from a general Principle of *Ill-nature*, (delighting in the Punishment of others,) or from Covetousness of Gain, or from *spiritual Pride* and *Hypocrisie*. Those Informers whom I am about to justify, are such only as are generally concerned in this Work of Reformation of Manners. I deny not that ill Men (whom no Body can *hinder* from informing, if they please) may act thro' Malice or Covetousness, as those did against whom our Statutes are levell'd; but then observe, they do it not *constantly*; 'tis only where they have a Quarrel to prosecute, or an Injury to revenge, or where they can gain considerably by it: Whereas those whom I speak of, inform against their vicious *Friends*, as well as Enemies; at *one* Time, as well as at another; not by Fits and Starts, but *regularly* and *constantly*; and all this with a Design of *reclaiming Men from their Vices*; which is enough, I think, to clear them of the Charge

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of

of personal *Malice*: Nor do they get one Farthing by it, as I told you before, and therefore cannot be supposed to do it for the Sake of *Gain*. As to a *Delight in punishing*, 'tis as plain they do not act from that; for eternal Punishments in Hell, which will certainly follow a vicious Person, impenitent and unreclaimed, are like to be infinitely greater than these trifling Penalties which our Laws have fixed upon him: If therefore they delight in his Punishment, why don't they rather let him run on in his Prophaneness and Wickedness, which will assuredly make him miserable at last beyond Expression? But instead of that, the grand Design and Tendency of their Endeavours is, to reduce him to a Sense of the Danger he is in, and rescue him, if possible, from everlasting Flames. Will you say, that God delights in punishing, because he sends Afflictions upon us in this Life, to reduce the foolish Sinner, that is wandering from his only substantial Happiness to Sin and Hell? Neither are good Men to be charged with Ill-nature, when, for the same Reason, they bring a wicked Man to Punishment here, that (if it be not thro' his own

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Fault and Obstinacy) he may not suffer hereafter. Nor are we to suppose them to act from *Spiritual Pride* or *Hypocrisie*. If any Man inform, who is guilty himself of the same, or as notorious and gross Offences as those he informs against, call him *Hypocrite*, and welcome; I justify neither his Action nor his Morals, but abhor them both: But if nothing appear in him inconsistent with a regular, well-ordered and religious Life, we are in common Justice to presume he is a good Man, and *no Hypocrite*; for 'tis next to Blasphemy in us to pretend to know Mens Hearts, which is only God's Prerogative. Now therefore, supposing him a good Man, because, to all Appearance, he is so, *Spiritual Pride* can never be an habitual Principle of any of his Actions; for 'tis in vain to talk of a good Man without Humility. But be this as it will, how shall we *know* that he does it out of spiritual Pride? This is a *secret Vice*, and where it is, is lodg'd *in the Heart*, which only God can see into. In short, we are not to judge of secret Principles, any further than outward Actions do incontestably betray them: And even *Spiritual Pride*, (as great a

Sin as it is,) is not a greater, than the *censorious* and *uncharitable* Spirit of that Man, who accuses another of it, without being very sure, by open Evidence, that his Accusation is true.

Eul. Well; but don't you think it a MEAN and DISHONOURABLE Thing to bring our Neighbours to Punishment?

Phil. No, I don't; for what shall make it so? If it be a dishonourable Practice, the Dishonour lies in the *Ill-nature* and *Ill Neighbourhood* of the thing: But there can be neither of these in bringing a vicious Man to Punishment, that God and Religion may be honoured, and the guilty Person reclaimed and amended. Would it be ill Neighbourhood, think you, when we perceive a Fire breaking out, to burst open the Door, run up to the Man's Chamber, and drag him out by the Hair of the Head, if he be in such a fatal Sleep (as generally People are when they are most in Danger, either in this, or in their spiritual Concerns,) not to perceive the Mischief, and is not to be roused by any Calls to awaken him? I'm sure it would be ill-Nature and ill Neighbourhood indeed, to let him lie still
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and be burnt to Ashes with his Family. No, Sir, the Dishonour of Informing lies quite another way. 'Tis dishonourable, I grant you, to *lie at catch* to trepan an *unwary* Offender into a *heavy Penalty* upon an unknown and *obsolete Law*, and for a *trifling Offence*: But none of these things are here. “ The Offence is *very gross*, an
 “ impudent and flaming Defiance of
 “ God and the Government; no little
 “ Nicety or Law-quirk, but a brutish
 “ Violation of all the Ties both of
 “ Grace and good Manners, the very
 “ Bane not only of *Christian* but of
 “ *Civil* Society. The Laws against them, as I observed before, are all *in their full Vigour*, and *very well known*; so that you may as well complain that a *Thief* is ungenerously trepan'd, when he is surprized in his Villany, and carried to Gaol, as that a Swearer is overheard; or a Drunkard seen by an Informer, and brought to Punishment; for I am sure his *Crime* is not less, tho' his *Punishment* be, and he as well knows that the Laws are against him. Neither can the Informers, for whom I am pleading, be said to *lie at catch* for Offences; they go about their own lawful Business; but
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*Letter of a
 Minister to
 his Parishion-
 ers, p. 8.*

if they see or hear these punishable Vices, they give Notice of them to the Magistrate: And where's the Trepan of this? Is a Man to shut his Eyes, or stop his Ears, in Compliment to prevailing Wickedness? Or are Contempts against the God of Heaven the only Crimes that ought to be smother'd up in Silence? No Body thinks it dishonourable to prosecute or give Evidence in Cases of Murder, Robbery, Battery, or Trespass, tho' the Gallows, or a *Fine and Damages* (perhaps considerable) must be the Issue of the Conviction; good Nature and good Neighbourhood are forgotten here, and the Informer is taught to look upon it as a Piece of *necessary Justice*, instead of any thing of Scandal. Now I challenge all the World to give me any Shadow of a Reason, why Informing shall be more scandalous in GOD's Cause, than in *our own* or our *Neighbour's*. I must make an Observation here, that no sort of Evidence lies under *so general a Disesteem* as those in Cases of VICE and TREASON; a Partiality which, in my Opinion, can proceed from nothing else than *as general a Disrespect* to GOD and to the GOVERNMENT. Now,
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I think, if there be any Thing dishonourable in informing without Reward, it will rather lie in those common Cases of Battery, Trespass, Defamation, and the like: For, according to the Principles of Honour, we should resent an Injury done to *our greatest Benefactors* (as God and our Governours are) above any done to *our selves*, and should be more ready to prosecute. A selfish Principle was always accounted base and mean; a public Spirit, and a Spirit of Gratitude and Friendship, always honourable and Praise-worthy; and why shall they not be so still? I'm sure, if Friendship and Gratitude be Points of Honour, (as undeniably they are,) it were the utmost Baseness to stand tamely by, and see and hear the ever blessed God (to whom we owe all our Enjoyments in this World, and all our Hopes of a better,) insulted by a foul-mouth'd Swearer, a brutish Drunkard, a prophane Wit, or any Body else, and not resent it as far as the Laws of our Country are able to curb and punish them: And if it be baseness to *suffer* these things, it must by Consequence be honourable to *resent*, and *have them punished*. To add but one

Prov. 14. 34. one further Remark upon this Head, *Vice* is its self a scandalous and dishonourable thing, even by the Confession of vicious Men themselves, (except such as by long Practice have hardened themselves to an unnatural and laboured Impudence :) Is not the *prophane Swearer* ashamed to be guilty of an Oath before a grave and serious Person whom he has a Respect for? Or if Custom draw him unawares into it, does he not blush when he is told of it? What is this but an Acknowledgment that it does not become him? Tho' *hard Drinking* be accounted good Fellowship, yet Reeling, Spewing, and Drunkenness, are generally reproached; so foolishly Men applaud the Cause, and ridicule the Effect. *Lewdness*, notwithstanding the vicious Pleasure in it, is yet a sneaking secret Vice: Men are ashamed to be charged with it, and Ecclesiastical Courts are frequently filled with Suits of Defamation for this, much oftener than with Prosecutions of the Vice its self. Now I argue from hence, that if Swearing, Drunkenness, and Lewdness, be *Vices*, the bringing them to Punishment must, by the Rule of Contraries, be a *Virtue*: And if these Vices

(and

(and all others) be *scandalous*, the Endeavouring to suppress them must, by the same Rule, be *honourable*, and *deserve Encouragement*.

Eul. Sir, you have proved very well, that informing against Vice and Immorality does not *deserve* to be ill spoken of; but yet we know in Fact *it is*; and I'm afraid this plausible Theory of your's will hardly protect us from the Disgrace that usually attends Informers.

Phil. It may be not: The Devil, who hates whatever may make Men better; and wicked Men, who hug their Vices and their own Ruine, will very possibly fix some Reproach upon you; but remember who they were that *loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God*. The Pharisees, in spite of all the Conviction they had from our Saviour's Miracles, durst not confess him for that Reason; and if we, upon the same base Principle, are *ashamed of him, and of his Words* (are ashamed to defend the Honour of his Religion, and his Laws) *in this adulterous and sinful Generation*, we may rest assured, that He also *will be ashamed of us, and utterly disown us, when he comes in the Glory of his Father* with

Jo. 12. 43.

Mark. 3. 38.

with the holy Angels, at the Day of Judgment. Come, Sir, we must venture something for God, who thought it not too much to give up his own Son for us. Let us not be so mean-spirited, as to be only willing to serve God with that which costs us nothing. Let us consider what we have, that is the dearest to us in the World, and let us (if there be Occasion) cheerfully sacrifice that, and be thankful that we have it to sacrifice, for his Honour and the Good of Mankind. The Respect, and Love, and Reputation of a Neighbourhood, tho' we naturally do, and reasonably may desire it, as one of the Comforts of this Life, will cost us much too dear if we prefer it before God and Charity. It will not be long before they that reproach us, and we that are reproached, shall be parted: Death will put a Stop to their Malice and to our sufferings, and the Day of Judgment will make a mighty Difference betwixt us, as the Son of Sirach well represents it: Then shall the righteous Man stand in great Boldness before the Face of such as have afflicted him, and made no Account of his Labours. When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible Fear, ---- and shall say within themselves, This was he whom we had some-

*Wisd. 5. 1,
2, 3, 4, 5.*

*sometime in Derision, and a Proverb of
 Reproach. We Fools, accounted his Life
 Madness, and his End to be without Ho-
 nour. How is he numbred among the
 Children of God, and his Lot is among
 the Saints! God also by the Prophet
 Isaiah, has expresly cautioned us not
 to regard the Reflexions that may be
 thrown upon us by ill Men in the
 way of our Duty. Hearken to me ye* *Isa. 51. 7, 8.*
*that know Righteousness, the People in
 whose Heart is my Law; Fear ye not the
 Reproach of Men, neither be afraid of their
 Revilings; for (says he) the Moth shall
 eat them up like a Garment, &c. but my
 Righteousness shall be for ever, and my
 Salvation from Generation to Generation.*
*St. Paul accordingly was so far from
 fearing, that he TOOK PLEASURE* *2 Cor. 12. 10.*
*in Reproaches for Christ's Sake; and so
 should every good Man: For Christ
 himself pronounces us blessed, when Men
 shall hate us, and separate us from their
 their Company, and reproach us, and cast
 out our Name as Evil, for our Duty
 and Respect to him. If to these
 Theological, I might add one Moral
 Consideration or two; It was always
 look'd upon by Men of Sense, as a
 very weak thing, to be afraid of do-
 ing Good, because of the impertinent
 Censure*

Sen. Epist. 76. Censure of the Wicked. *Contempt its self is to be despised when it follows virtuous Actions:* For it is not common Opinion, but the real Nature of things, by which we are to be determined. Nay more, we ought to suspect our selves, when ill Men generally *Speak well of us*; their Commendation is a sort of Scandal: For who should they speak well of, but of such as are like themselves? And on the contrary, 'tis part of a good Character to *displease them*: because they are the declared Enemies of all that's good and virtuous. So that we have more Reason to *be proud* of their Reproach, than to *fear* it.

Luke 6. 26.

Essay upon
the Execution of the
Laws, Part I.
p. 152, 153.
2d Edit.

Object. XIV. *Eul.* But pray let us into a fuller Notion of this Scheme of Your's. Whom would you have to undertake this Business? Would you have *Gentlemen* to turn Informers? I can't but think still, with your good Leave, 'tis *somewhat below a Gentleman*.

Phil. If, as I have proved before, it be not at all reproachful, but on the contrary, a Debt we owe in Point of Gratitude and Friendship to our greatest Benefactor, not to suffer him to be affronted, and his Laws insulted: Then surely Persons of Quality are as much

much interested in this Obligation as meaner Persons, and more. The Debt of Love and Gratitude naturally increases in Proportion to the Benefits we receive. Now 'tis certain that Men of Fortunes and Figure in the World have not only the common Blessings of Creation, Preservation, Redemption, Health, Strength, &c. to be thankful for to God, and to engage them equally with others to promote his Interest and Honour: But their Estates, their Dignity, and their Reputation, are an *additional* Charge upon *their* Gratitude. They that owe more than others *to* him, should do more than others *for* him. Look, further, into the Conduct of Gentlemen; do they not chiefly value themselves as *Men of Honour*? Is not that the Word, whenever an Affront is offered either to *them* or to *their Friend*? And why shall not Honour as much inflame them upon Indignities offered to Almighty God, (who is the greatest and the best Friend they have,) as to themselves, or any Person whatsoever upon Earth, whom they profess to love and reverence? Not that I would have them carry their Resentment at a Sword's Point (as the un-

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reasonable and wicked Custom has prevailed in common Injuries;) for Passion and Murder are unlawful in all Cases, and can never be sanctified by pretending God Almighty's Quarrel: But in whatever Methods they may *lawfully* resent their own Injuries or their Friend's, I do say, they are much more bound in Honour to resent Affronts offered to God. No Body doubts but a Gentleman has *his Remedy at Law*, to bring to Punishment the Person that injures him, and may lawfully make use of it. Equivalent to this in Cases of Immorality and Prophaneness, (which are public Infults upon the Honour of God,) he has his proper way to resent them by *informing the Magistrate*, if the Offender will not otherwise be reclaimed; and I think him *bound* to make use of this, because his Obligation is certainly greater to defend the Honour of God, than ever it can be to defend *his own* or *any Body's else*.

Eul. Say what you will, it's *without Precedent* for Gentlemen to give themselves the Trouble of Informing.

Phil. I believe not. But if you want a Precedent, 'tis in your Power *to make one*: And by the same Rule that

that *you* stay for *another* to begin, another may stay for *you*; and so in a continual Circle of politic Delays, and Complaisance, and doing nothing.

Chor. For my Part, I am clearly with *Philaretus* thus far, that if any Attempts be made for the Suppressing Vice by Methods of Law, Estate and Quality can be no Exemption from the Service. Would *Gentlemen* undertake it, 'twould give Reputation to the Design, strike a general Terror into Offenders, and stand fair for as great and general a Success. But methinks, it does not become your *mean Object*. XV. and *ordinary People* to set up for informing: It is not fit that Persons of Rank or Substance should lie at the Mercy of every ragged Peasant.

Phil. You will oblige me, Sir, if you will let me into the Mystery of this Distinction. Is it that a poor Man can't speak the Truth as well as a rich one? Or that he is not as likely to fear God and reverence an Oath? I never yet could learn that Honesty, and Truth, and Virtue, were confined to Riches: I'm sure both Scripture

and Experience tell us otherwise; not only that poor Men may be as good, but

Psal. 62. 9.

Luke 18. 24.

1 Cor. 1. 26.

30.

but *Jam.* 2. 5, 6.

but that they are generally *better* Christians than the Rich and Great.

Chor. You mistake me: I am not arguing that such an Informer *is not to be believed*, but that *it does not become him* to give Information against his Betters, who will take it for a *Disgrace* to have such Evidence admitted against them.

Phil. The Disgrace lies in the *Crime*, not in the Witness that discovers it. But why is not the same Exception made in other common Cases, Criminal or Civil? If one Gentleman kill another, and a poor Labourer see it; would the Prisoner, do you think, except against that Witness for his Poverty? Or would not the Court over-rule him as very impertinent if he should? If you have a Right of Common, an Action of Trespass, or any thing else to try, would you refuse a poor Man's Evidence for you, or look upon't as a Disgrace that he should be sworn in Court against you? No, if he swears directly to the Issue, neither you nor your Adversary will dispute his Circumstances, or despise his Evidence. Why then shall he not be as readily allowed for a Witness (tho' against
Men

Men of better Substance than himself) when he appears for GOD and VIRTUE, as in Matters of *ordinary Concern*, where Justice is to be done to the Community, or to a private Person? But whatever Force there is in this Exception against him, I must not flatter you, it proceeds apparently from *Pride*, and an unchristian *Contempt of the Poor*.

Chor. I'm afraid it does; but I speak the Sense of a great many, and if ever Reformation be set upon the Foot which you propose, you'll find this Objection made, and therefore I offer it to you to be examined.

Phil. Let me ask you then another Question. If only Persons of Substance and Figure are *to inform*, are the Vices of *mean* and *ordinary* People to be *informed against*?

Chor. Yes sure: For Vice and Virtue are the same in all Ranks.

Phil. Right; but consider then, if *Gentlemen* only, and *rich Men* are to prosecute Vice, you are in a fair way to have the *poorer sort* (which is the greatest Part of the Nation) *unreformed still*: For 'tis not with *them*, but with their *Equals*, that your Men of Wealth converse; and therefore these

(if they were well-disposed) would have but little Opportunity (now and then perhaps by Accident) of convicting *poor* Offenders. So that if you would have the same Care taken to reform *the Poor* as others, you must allow *them* to be Informers too.

Chor. It may be so, against their *Equals*: But that does not come up to the Objection of informing against *their Betters*.

Phil. Yes; for by the same Rule that they inform against their *Equals*, they must be allowed it against *the other*. Because as Zeal for God and Virtue is a general Duty, an Obligation upon the Conscience of all Ranks of Men alike, so *Vice* is the same in all Men that indulge it, whatever their outward Distinctions be; the Prophaneness, the Drunkenness, &c. of a *Gentleman*, is as provoking to God, as subject to our Laws, and ought as carefully to be punished, as the same Vices in a *poorer Man*. If therefore Vice be as hateful in rich Men as in any Body else, 'tis every where to be hated, and every where to be suppress'd: And if the Poor are equally obliged with others (by that general Zeal for Virtue)

tue) to do their utmost to suppress it; what Authority have we to tie them down to the Suppressing of it only within their own Rank? Why are they not as much bound in Charity to attempt the Reformation of a Superior, as of an Equal, if the Reformation of them both be of the like Concern as you acknowledge it is? But, to dispatch this Point, I think your mean and obscure People have hardly *any other* (I'm sure not a more extensive or a better) *way* of becoming *public Blessings* to their Country, which every good Man should be ambitious of, than by setting themselves with Vigour, Activity, and Courage, to promote the Suppression of Vice. In this they *may* do *considerable* Service to the whole Kingdom, and in so doing are a much greater Honour, as well as Benefit to their Country, than a vicious Gentleman, whatever his Parts, his Fortunes, or his Station are. Let us do in our Wars with Vice at home, as with our Enemies abroad; let Gentlemen put themselves at the Head of our Troops, command and lead them on; but the main Body of our Forces must consist of such as these, our common Soldiery must be made up of

meaner Persons ; and I pray God we may have as numerous Armies to fight for the Kingdom of Christ, against the strong Holds of Sin and Wickedness, as for the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, and the Liberties of *Europe* ; and may they have (by the Grace of God) as resolute and brave a Spirit, and (by his Blessing) as glorious a Success. I'm afraid we are not otherwise so well stocked with truly Christian Patriots, that we should refuse the Assistance of the poorer sort amongst us in this good Work, who, as their Business calls them frequently out into their Neighbourhood, and as their Numbers are considerable, may be very useful to this Purpose. And therefore let as many of them join with us as will, the *Credit* of the Design ought not to be the less, and the *Success* of it may be much greater. For this will not be the first time that

1 Cor. i. 27,
28, 29.

God has chosen *the weak things of the World to confound the Mighty, the mean Persons of the World, and Persons that are despised, to break the Powers of Darkness ; that no Flesh should glory in his Presence.*

Object. XVI.

Chor. Sir, you must bear with me a little further ; every Body (you know) is

is fond of *Power*; and those as much as any, who, by their mean Station in the World, enjoy least of it. Now if the poorer sort of People should be active in this Matter, would it not look as if they did it only to acquire a sort of *Power* and *Superiority* in the Neighbourhood, and *make their Betters stand in awe of them* for Fear of being brought to Punishment for their Vices?

Phil. The last Clause of your Objection seems to imply *Malice*, as well as *Ambition*, in the Informer. Now I acknowledged before, that some ill People may possibly bethink them of this as a way to be revenged; but such do it out of a *wicked Principle*, and are not the Men whom I would ever pretend to justify or encourage, your former Clause I don't well understand; what Power or Superiority they can get by it, and consequently what Principles of Ambition they can be acted by. I dare say they won't expect to be made *Justices of the Peace* for't; nor (which is indeed the more probable Preferment) *Constables* of their Parish; for their Neighbours will be shy enough of putting them into an Office that will supply them with a Power which

which they already pretend to be afraid of.

Chor. But don't you consider, that 'tis in the Power of every Informer to have whom he pleases punished?

Phil. No, it is not; he can have no Body punished but *the Guilty*.

Chor. I mean so.

Phil. Very well; and that's their own Fault. If this be all, let them keep temperate, and sober, and chaste; leave off their Swearing, their Cursing, and their other Vices, they will need to stand in Fear of no Body: But if they will continue in such wicked Practices as the Law takes Notice of, let the Consequence be what it will, *themselves* only are to blame. And after all, your Objection's somewhat mysterious, as to this *Power* and *Superiority* in the Neighbourhood which you suppose the Informer to aim at. *Superiority* it can give him none: It neither increases his Riches one Farthing, nor advances his Quality one Step, nor raises his Authority, nor swells his Reputation in the least; nor is it *He* or *his informing* that makes People afraid of him, but the Conscience of their own Guilt and Wickedness, which they know deserves to be

be punished, and they find it likely so to be. As I said before, if *they* don't *lay themselves open* by their Vices, no Advantage can be taken against them: If they do, 'tis not *the Informer* takes the Advantage, but *the Law*; and *this* indeed does gain a Superiority, as by punishing those that offend against it, it preserves its own Majesty, and increases the Reverence that is due to it; but what's all this to the Informer? He is only a *Servant*, and *Minister* of the Law, and a Servant too, who, out of Respect to his Master, serves *without Wages*. In short, if the Informer against Vice aim at any thing of *Power* by it, it is a *Power to do Good*, which, for the Benefit of the Public, ought to be indulged to every Body: If he rise to any *Superiority* by it, 'tis only that of a *good Conscience*, a superior Virtue, a superior Zeal for God, and Charity to Men, which I'm afraid his Neighbours neither incline to imitate nor envy.

Eul. Now, Sir, I'll be obliged to *object*.XVII. you if you'll answer *me*: Somewhat put me by, or else I ought to have mentioned it when we were talking of Principles of Honour. This Informing sets not well upon my Mind, there

there seems to be so much *Treachery* in running away with the free and private Conversation of Company to a Magistrate. This is turning Society into Trepan, and telling Tales out of School. Therefore Solomon advises *not to be a Witness against our Neighbour without Cause*; and tells us, *he that covers a Transgression, seeks Love*; but *he that repeats a Matter, separateth very Friends*.

Prov. 24. 28.

Prov. 17. 9.

Phil. Our Notions of Honour are to be governed by two Rules, *good Sense* and *Religion*: If they are inconsistent with the former, 'tis all Affectation and trifling; if, with the latter, 'tis Impiety and Wickedness, the preferring Man to God, and the Creature to the Creator. Now to examine the Point by these two Rules; Let me ask you, whether *good Sense* does not instruct us to value the Honour and Interest of one to whom we have *greater* Obligations, before that of others, to whom we owe *much less*? And certainly, we are more indebted to God than to any humane Friendships or Acquaintance whatsoever. If *He* therefore be blasphemed or insulted, his Name banded about with Contempt, his Laws trampled upon,

or

or his Religion ridiculed, shall the Presence of *Treachery* tie your Tongue? Or can it be true Honour to be thus faithless and treacherous (as by conniving at such Indignities you assuredly are) to your greatest Obligations and your best Friend? Such Honour as this is against *common Gratitude*, and therefore against *good Sense*. But if you bring it also to the Test of *Religion*, it will appear not only trifling and absurd, but *impious* too. For, what shall we sacrifice the Honour of GOD to Ceremony and Complaisance to *Men*? Is our Reverence to our Maker fall'n so low, that we should pay a greater to those vicious Wretches that every Day affront *him* by their insolent Prophane-ness, and expose *themselves* by their brutish Debaucheries? Surely, Sir, I need not tell you, that if the Friendship of a *Heathen* would carry him no further than *ad Aras*, no further than his Duty to the Gods he worshipp'd would allow, the Honour of a *Christian* would be scandalously imperfect, if he should not make the same Reserve for that Affection, Zeal and Allegiance he owes to his eternal Master. Beside, suppose the End of the Information be, that the Offender may be reclaimed,

Pericles.

claimed, let me ask you, is it Treachery *to do him Good*? Is *Charity* a base or an unworthy Practice? Again, your Company, when they swear and damn, and get drunk before you, don't pretend to intrust you with all this as *a Secret*; where's then the Point of Honour in *concealing* it? They know, when you come amongst them, or by your Character *may* know, what Obligations lie upon you, not to suffer these ranting Practices to pass unchecked or unpunished; and therefore when they venture to be guilty of them before you, 'tis in Effect a bidding you Defiance, a Declaration that they value not whether you inform or no: Where's then the Treachery of informing? The Texts you bring are nothing to the Purpose. Be

Prov. 24. 28. *not Witness against thy Neighbour without Cause*, was the first of them: Now this *Witness without Cause*, some of the best ancient and modern Versions translate, and some Commentators (following the Hebrew Original and them) interpret [*a false and lying Witness*]; taking the Word [*Cause*] to signifie, not the Reason or Obligation they have or have not to inform, but the Truth and Reality of the Offence of which we pretend to im-

Vid. Poli Synopsin in locum,

impeach him. But granting your own Interpretation, it can signifie only [*without a just Cause*] i. e. except the Offence be of so high a Nature that it ought not to be concealed. I will ask you then; are not *Prophane Swearing*, &c. Offences that deserve to be punished, and ought to be suppress'd? Are they trifling and insignificant Failures, below the Notice of a Christian? And if not, as I'm sure you will own, is there not Cause enough, think you, in the Sense of the Text, to inform? Your other Quotation, [*He that covers a Transgression seeks Love, Prov. 17. 9. but he that repeats a Matter, separateth very Friends;*] touches the Case in Question as little as your first. The *Antithesis* in the latter Part of the Verse ought, in all Reason, to be our Guide to the Meaning of what goes before. Now the latter Clause seems plainly to refer to the impertinent, idle, or malicious Humour of many People, who delight to run about with Stories, to curry Favour with one Man, by telling him what another says of him, and deliver themselves of all the indiscreet Reflexions they have heard in this Company for the Entertainment of the next. This is what Solomon

lomon calls *repeating a Matter*, and this may very well separate the best Friends, and create a great deal of Mischief. The other Part of the Verse then, that answers to this, must signifie by [*him that covers a Transgression*] that discreet and peaceable Person who industriously conceals the Reflexions that are made, and the ill-natured Stories that are told before him, both from the Person concerned, and every Body that may divulge it; because he would not excite Resentment and Revenge amongst his Neighbours. But what is all this to informing the *Magistrate* of such scandalous Offences, as are at once *Affronts to GOD*, and *dangerous to the Public*, as Vice and Prophaneness are? For I must observe further, that the Word made Use of in the Text is [*Transgression*], which, in Scripture, signifies usually the *lowest* Class of Sins, as [*Sin*] and [*Iniquity*] denote the *greater*, and more *enormous* Crimes. So that what is spoke of here is only the covering of a *Transgression*, such an one (as Commentators describe it) “ as may be concealed
 “ without Detriment to the GLORY
 “ of GOD, the GOOD of our
 “ NEIGHBOUR, or the SAFETY
 and

and BENEFIT of the COMMON-WEALTH. But this is not the Case of those bold and gross Impieties of *Prophaneness* and *Debauchery*, which cannot be concealed without Detri-ment in all these Instances; and there-fore the Text does not relate to *them*. Besides, you will grant me, I suppose, that the sacred Scriptures command nothing *treacherous* or *dishonourable*; and that if any Notion of Honour be formed, which must expose any Pre-cept in Scripture to such an Imputati-on, that must certainly be a false and wicked Notion. Now if you will give your self the Trouble to look into the Thirteenth Chapter of *Deuterono-* Deut. 13. 6,-
11.
my, you will find that the *Jews* were expresly commanded, (and that with several Repetitions, and the greatest Emphasis that could be,) to *inform a-*
gainst and bring to *Punishment* the nearest Relation or the dearest Friend they had, who should SECRETLY entice them to Idolatry. Your Obje-ction of Treachery seems (if there be any thing in it) to bear hard upon this Text; or rather the Text bears hard upon your Objection. For (1.) here's a Supposition that the Crime was *secret*, betwixt the Offender and
H the

the Informer only ; and if the Pretence of Honour would hold any where against informing of Wickedness, it should be here : And yet you see, the Law of God obliged the Person who could be Evidence to inform. Here is (2.) a further Supposition that the Offender may be a *Brother*, a *Son*, a *Wife*, or a *Friend* ; and sure if the Pretence of Treachery would have any Strength against informing, these Cases would give the fairest hold to your Objection : yet even these are thrown aside from any Allowance by the Authority of God himself. This (3.) was in a *Case of Blood* too, a Crime that was to be punished with *Death* ; yet notwithstanding all that, the Offender's nearest Relation was by no Means to spare him.

Obj. XVIII. *Eul.* I'll give you up that Point : But this informing will be look'd upon as a *troublesome* and *unneighbourly* Office, how good soever the Design may be.

Phil. It cannot be an *unneighbourly* Office, because 'tis an Office of *Charity*, and the greatest Charity that can be, to put them in Mind by these trifling and gentle Penalties, that they are out of their way to Happiness, and

and are provoking Almighty God to their Destruction. It's true, the Apostle advises us to *forbear one another in Love*: But those last Words, (according to the Remark of *Zanchy*,) define the Measure *how far* we are to forbear; "We are to do it (says he) *so far as true Affection and Charity will bear us out*: But we are not commanded to *dissemble or conceal their Vices, for this would be against true Charity*; and indeed the Sense of the whole Text is no more than this, that we ought to bear with the morose and awkward Humours of those about us, and to continue all affectionate and charitable Offices to them, notwithstanding their Infirmities.

Chor. What say you to that Text in the Epistle to the Romans, *As much as in you lies, live peaceably with all Men*? *Rom. 12. 18.*

Phil. I readily grant we ought to do so, *if it be possible*, (according to the Limitation which St. Paul himself prefixes to that Precept:) i. e. "if it may be done without betraying the Cause of JUSTICE, PIETY, and Truth; if it may be done with a good Conscience, to the Glory of God, and the Edification of the Church; for these are to be preferred to Peace. *Poli Synops.*

“ He would not have us (says *Paræ-*
 “ *us*) be silent, and dissemble for the
 “ Sake of Peace, when we hear *the*
 “ *Truth blasphemed, and God offended.*
 But if we can have Peace upon any
 reasonable and religious Terms, confi-
 stent with the other Parts of our Duty
 both to God and Man, we are to
 seek it *as much as in us lies.* I deny not
 that the Practice of informing against
 Vice may, for a while, perhaps give
 some *Disturbance and Uneasiness* to the
 Country; but 'tis a Disturbance that
must be given them, in order to their
 own Good: *Faithful are the Wounds of*
a Friend; but the Kisses of an Enemy are
deceitful. What they call Peace is but a
stupid Security, and what they call
Disturbance, is no more than the *a-*
wakening them out of it, and shewing them
their Danger. And after all, wicked
 Men themselves are the only Distur-
 bers of the Country. *Art thou he that*
troubles Israel? said *Ahab* to *Elijah*:
 To which the Prophet smartly and
 very justly answers him; ----- *I have*
not troubled Israel; but thou and thy Fa-
ther's House, in that ye have forsaken the
Commandments of the Lord.

See Part I. p.
 98, 99. (2d
 Edit.)

Prov. 27. 6.

1 Kings 18.
 17, 18.

Object. XIX.

Chor. But what sort of Men, do
 you think, were they whom the Pro-
 phet

phet *Isaiah* describes, with so much Triumph in their Destruction, --- *that WATCH for Iniquity, and that make a Man an Offender for a Word?* Were not these *Informers*?

Phil. Informers! No, but just the contrary; even those that ought to be informed against. The Sound of the Words, I perceive, has led you into this Fancy; but if the Gravity of the Subject did not lay a Restraint, 'twere possible to be very pleasant upon such a notorious Misapplication. The Prophet is there representing that better State of things, wherein Righteousness should flourish; and in order thereto he tells you, that *they that watch for Iniquity are cut off*; i. e. there are no more any of those vicious Wretches left that *delight* in Iniquity, *Job 24. 15,* and greedily watch for all Opportunities of Debauchery and Intemperance; *16.* nor of those *that make a Man an Offender for a Word*, i. e. will not bear the least Reproof or pious Admonition, but take Offence at every thing that is said or done to reclaim them, and lay a Snare for him that reproveth in the Gate (as the same Verse explains it;) are so bent upon their Wickedness, that they do their utmost to ruine (or at least,

* Jer. 7. 2.

least, to slander and defame) the * Prophets, who faithfully denounce the Judgments of the Lord against them ; as *Jeremiah* found by Experience : Report, say they, and we will report it ; all my Familiars watched for my halting, saying, peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our Revenge against him.

Jer. 20. 10.

Object. XX.

Eul. I think, *Choristus*, you are fairly outed of that Text ; but I have another to propose, which will be somewhat more to the Purpose. Be *Eccles. 7. 16.* not righteous overmuch, neither make thy self overwise ; why shouldst thou destroy thy self ? This violent Appetite for Justice and the Severity of the Laws, seems to be forbidden us here, as it looks ill-natured and assuming, and will set every Body against us to do us a Mischief.

Phil. Pray, *Choristus*, how do you understand it ?

Chor. I think he means, that we should not place Righteousness in such things as God has not required of us, or expose our selves to Hazards and Trials for that which God has not commanded us, and made our Duty.

Phil. Suppose your Interpretation right ; yet it may be prov'd, that informing

forming against Vice is *our Duty*; and then the Objection vanishes at once. But the Meaning of this Text may, with great Appearance of Reason, be accounted for several Ways. It may be a Caution against those *voluntary Austerities*, and *Mortifications*, and too *rigorous Discipline* in Religion, which may destroy our Health, and make our Lives a Burden. Or, considering that Clause in it [*neither make thy self overwise*] which seems intended as a Parallel to the *being righteous overmuch*; it may be a Caution that we should not be too strict and severe in *passing Judgment on God's Providence*, from the seemingly confused and promiscuous Method of his dealing with good and bad Men in this Life, which was taken Notice of the Verse before; that we should not pretend to be more righteous and wise than God himself, and think that we could govern the World more equitably than he does; nor pry too far into those Mysteries, which are too deep for us; least we should *confound* our selves. Or again, the same Clause may lead us to refer it to a *rigorous Niceness* in *finding Fault*, or reproving for every small Offence, scarce worth the Notice; which sort

Bp. Stilling-
fleet, Vol. 3.
Serm. 13. p.
493.

of magisterial Conduct exposes us to Envy, and the Imputation of thinking our selves wiser in discovering the strict Limits of Sin and Duty than every Body else. All these are very probable Interpretations: But that *Eulabes's* Objection may have all the Strength it can pretend to, I am willing to understand it with the greatest Part of Interpreters, as forbidding a too rigorous exacting of *Punishment*, Righteousness usually signifying Justice. But then my Gloss upon it shall be the Paraphrase of a late ingenious Writer upon this and the Verse before

*Select Moral
Books of the
Old Test. &c.
paraphrased.
Printed for
Churchill,
1706.*

it. " I have seen (says he) good
" Men visited with severe Provi-
" dences, whilst ill Men have lived
" in Prosperity: But the Misfortunes
" of good Men have been drawn upon
" them by an UNSEASONABLE
" RIGOUR and INTEMPERATE
" ZEAL, which are therefore to be
" avoided as well as *Prophaneness*.
Now that the giving of due and frequent Informations against Vice and Prophaneness, that they may be punished, is not an UNSEASONABLE Rigour, is evident from the *scandalous Rampancy* of prophane Oaths and Curses, Lewdness, and Debauchery, which

which have so horridly over-run the Nation, that if a Stop be not soon put to them, we have little to expect but the Destruction of our Country. And is this a Time to stand cringing to Impiety, and complementing Vice, for Fear of *being righteous overmuch*? Shall we be weighing Moderation by Grains and Scruples, till a general Famine or Pestilence overtake us, the Enemy's Sword be in our Bowels, and all the Kingdom in a Flame? *Solomon* says, *There is a Time for every Thing*; and really, Gentlemen, if ever there was, or can be a Time to punish Vice, 'tis now, when it is got to such a Head, that in the midst of many Thousands, many Millions of Christians, we are hard put to it to find Christianity, the Corruption is so general and so great. And as the Punishment of Vice is by no Means *unseasonable*, when things are advanced to such a Crisis as they are at present; so neither is that Prosecution of it, which I am pleading for, **INTEMPERATE Zeal**, or any thing of **RIGOUR**. *Not intemperate*; because I am as desirous as you can be, that it should be bounded within the Authority of God's Word, and the Direction of

See Part I. p.
hu- 102, 103, &c.

humane Laws ; that it should not be tainted with Passion, Partiality, or secular Interests, nor carried on with Fury, Rashness, and Imprudence ; but in a calm and regular way, so as may best promote the Glory of God and the Good of the Offender. I do not desire an Information should be given, where you think a Man may be privately reclaimed by your Advise or Reproof, and where you are willing to try ; but very few, (I'm afraid) will be wrought upon that way ; and where you find, or have Reason to expect, they will not, to forbear informing against them, will not be *Moderation*, but *Trifling* ; not *prudent Zeal*, but *Cowardice*. Nor will the Punishment of Vice, in the Method which I propose, fall within the Notion of RIGOUR. I don't desire that *all Persons*, without Distinction, should be punished. A very good Man may sometimes, by Surprize or Accident, offend, who is so far from making a common Practice of it, that he abhors the Sin, and recovers himself by a true and quick Repentance ; but your *customary* and *common* Offender has not the same Right to Clemency. Neither do I desire that
every

every single Instance of offending, even in such a *profligate* Wretch, should be brought to Punishment; but he is to be punished often enough to be a Warning to others, to make him know his Duty, or at least to suppress the public Impudence of his Vices. Neither am I for running to *the utmost Extent* of the Law; as in the Statutes against *Tippling* (for Instance,) which affect every Day of the Week alike: I would only give Information, when it is practised upon the *Lord's-Day*. Neither are *the Penalties* assigned by our Laws against Vice and Immorality (as I have observed to you before,) severe enough in themselves to be represented as *rigorous*; nor are the *Offences* to be informed of *slight and inconsiderable*: But of the last Concern, both to the Credit of Religion, and Safety of the Common-wealth, to be suppressed. Now upon all these Considerations, I challenge any ingenuous Person (who has a due Concern upon him for Religion) to point me out the *Rigour*, the *unseasonable* and *intemperate* Zeal, or in Solomon's Words, the being *righteous overmuch*, in the Scheme that I lay down for Execution of the Laws against Impiety.

Eul.

Object, XXI.

Eul. Well, I have some further Scruple upon me however, from our Saviour's Command, that *we should do by others, as we would have others do by us.* Now, I confess, I should not take it well, to be informed of, and made a public Example my self; it would be kinder in the Person that sees or hears my Offence, to *reprove* me: And therefore I think I ought to take the same Method with others; to *reprove*, and not bring them to *Punishment*.

Phil. I can't allow your Case to be a proper Instance. You're a Person of Character for Religion, of known Sobriety, and a good Life; and if, against the constant Bent of your Will, and Tenor of your Practice, you should happen sometime or other to be surprized in Drink, or Passion should draw you unawares into an Oath or Curse, or any other Temptation should draw you into any other Sin, within the Verge of our Laws to punish, I think it would be kinder to *you*, and shew more Respect to *Religion*, to reprove you secretly, than to expose you to the public Censure of the Law: And it would well become *you* to do the same to a Person of the like good Character. But the Rule
does

does by no Means oblige you to show the same Tenderneſs to *common, open,* and *notorious* Offenders; who, by the frequent and habitual Practice of Vice, ſhow that they have not a ſufficient Stock of *Modesty* left them, to make a private Reproof effectual, and no *Reputation* in Virtue that can ſuffer by the Punishment of their Vices. “ The
 “ true Extent of this Rule is, that
 “ whatſoever I could *juſtly* and *reasona-*
 “ *bly* deſire of another Man in my
 “ Circumſtances, and it would be-
 “ come him *in Charity* to do for me,
 “ the ſame I ought to do for my
 “ Neighbour. If then it be *juſt* and
reasonable that Vice ſhould be puniſh-
 ed; that *Averſion to Punishment*, which
 (tho’ agreeable to Nature) is *contrary*
to Reason in my *own* Caſe, can never
 be the Rule for my Behaviour *in ano-*
ther Man’s. Again, if it be (as cer-
 tainly it is) a Piece of *Charity* to at-
 tempt to reclaim Men by the Execu-
 tion of the Laws upon them; neither
 ought I to take it ill, when the like
 Method is tried upon *me*; or tho’ I
 ſhould be ſo fooliſh, the Rule of *doing*
as I would be done by can never juſtifie
 my Neglect of this good Office to a-
 nother; becauſe the *Charity* is ſtill the
 ſame,

Bp. Wake’s
 Expoſ. of the
 Church-Cate.
 §. 27. Q. 6

same, and *my Obligations* to that Charity, with Respect to *Him*, whatever Colours mistaken Self-love may represent it in, when the Case shall possibly be *mine*. So that conniving at my Neighbour's Vices being against both *Reason* and *Charity*, I am not to do it, tho' perhaps I should desire my self upon Occasion to escape unpunished.

Obj. XXII. Chor. I hope, however, you will excuse the *Dissenters* upon this Rule. You know how much *we* suffered by Informers, within the Memory of half an Age: And all the World would cry out upon *us* as very unreasonable, if we should make our selves busie in bringing Men to Punishment, when we have suffered so many Hardships in the like kind our selves.

Phil. I grant that you did suffer considerably in King *Charles II.* time, by being informed against for not complying with, or for acting contrary to the Discipline, and outward Order of our Church, the Laws of the State being then in full Execution against you. But either the Informers *did well* in bringing to Punishment the Breach of those Laws, or they *did not*. If they *did well* in endeavouring to suppress Offences against the

ex-

exterior Order and Conformity of our Church; you will do much better in endeavouring to suppress Offences that are against the very Life and Being of Religion, as Prophaneness and Immorality are. For our Liturgy, Ceremonies, and Church-Government, and the outward Uniformity of all these, however excellent and useful in themselves, and worthy of all Compliance and Obedience, must still be valued at too high a Rate, if we prefer not the Virtue and Morals of Men, the Substance and Vitals of Christianity before 'em; for to obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the Fat of Rams. But if they did ill, as to be sure you think they did, in prosecuting you for not submitting to our Establishment; I shall argue with you upon your own Principles, and ask you *what it was that made their Prosecution blameable?*

[Sam. 13.22.]

Chor. That can be no hard Question, when they molested, persecuted, and punished us, for acting by the Rules of Conscience, and refusing to do what we thought it sinful to comply with.

Phil. Very well; if then the Authority of Conscience had not been on your Side,

Side, the Prosecution would have been no Hardship, but very fit and reasonable. Now to apply this to the present Case; the vicious and prophane have not the least *Pretence* of CONSCIENCE to justify their Oaths and Curses, their Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, their Lewdness, Drunkenness, and Debaucheries; and therefore, 'tis easie to perceive, according to your own Scheme, the Difference there is betwixt your informing against *them*, and the Informations that brought such Hardships upon *you*. Did Offenders in *Vice* and *Immorality* act upon Conscience too, then your Application of the Rule would hold, and it would indeed be unreasonable for you, who had before suffered for the Sake of Conscience, to bring others now to suffer for the same Principle. But as those profligate Wretches are pursued upon another Score, even for *not acting by the Rules of Conscience*; it is so far from being unreasonable, that you should inform against them, that on the other Hand, it would be a great Absurdity if you do not. For the Dissenters (who profess *so high a Regard* to the Authority of those Rules, and have suffered for adhering to *them*)

them) ought to be some of the first and forwardest to join with the good Laws we have *to promote* the Empire of Conscience in the World, and punish such as act *against* it.

Chor. I shall be as glad as any Body to see Vice effectually suppressed; and if you Churchmen have a Mind to be doing this way, Go on and prosper: But I don't think it fit for *the Dissenters* to meddle.

Eul. Why, what's the Matter? If informing against Immoralities be a *Method fit to be taken*, why shall the Dissenters refuse it? And if *it be not*, why do you wish *us* Success in it?

Phil. Prophaneness and Vice are Scandals to the Christian Religion in general; and therefore the Suppression of them can be no *Party Business*, but the Interest and Duty of the *Dissenters* as well as of the *Church of England*, and of every Body else that pretends to be a Christian.

Chor. But you seem to have a Mind to draw in the Dissenters only to *ex-* obj. XXIII.
pose and *make them odious to the People*. For tho' perhaps your Highflyers (some of them) may *pretend* to join with the Societies for Reformation, 'tis all no

more than Flourish and Intrigue, they leave the Burden chiefly upon *us*.

Phil. Prithee, what dost thou mean by trumping up *Distinctions* and *Parties* in a Design which, from the very Nature of it, *cannot* be a Party-Business, as I told you before? Come, I must tell you, whether you will consider it or no, you have this Objection from a very ill Hand. It has always been the Policy of the Devil, and always too successful, to hinder the uniting in good Designs for the Promoting of Piety and Virtue (which would be fatal to his Kingdom) by breaking Men into *Names* and *Parties*, and firing both Sides with *mutual Jealousies*. For Shame let us not suffer such a *notorious, visible, and detected* Peice of Art as this to blind us any longer. Let us at last, for very Shame, learn to prefer the Interests of Piety and Religion, above all the trifling Disputes we have so long been fooled with. The best way to Peace is *Piety*: As both Sides are equally concerned in this, let both, with equal Vigour join to promote it, and that will naturally draw off the acid Humours, the Heat and Keennefs of a Party. Uniting in one common Design,

sign, which both acknowledge to be good, and both industriously pursue together, will render them *familiar* one with another, and that of Course will sweeten their Blood, and cool their Tempers in things of less Importance, and make them both forget the Jealousies and Passions that before divided them. And if ever the Peace of the Church be settled, I am very confident this will be the way: Disputing, distinguishing, and opprobrious Names, to be sure, will never do it. But in Answer to your Objection, I must tell you, *the Suspicion's groundless*; and you have been imposed upon in matter of *Fact* too. The Churchmen (call them *High* or *Low*,) do (not *in Appearance* only, but) *really, heartily, and fully* join in the Design, and take Part of the Burden as well as you, either in the Capacity of Magistrates or Informers; are as active in pursuing the noble Scheme, and run all Hazards of Hatred, Disgrace, &c. with the same generous Faith, and Zeal, and Charity, and Courage, as the Dissenters either do, or are desired to do in this good Work. And the wisest of your Perswasion at *London*, or any where else, make no

Scruple at all to join with them, who yet are as able to discover an *Intrigue*, or see to the Bottom of a *Flourish*, as you or any Body, and in other things as heartily concerned for the Reputation and Interest of the Dissenters. But suppose the Church-Men did indeed design (as you suspect) *to make you odious* only, and to set the People more against you, yet the Interest of the Kingdom of God, and the Progress of Virtue and practical Religion, are to be preferred to the Interest of any Party whatsoever; and *you* ought to prefer it to *your's*. Shall a Service so directly tending to the Glory of God, and to the public Good, be declined by the Dissenters, for Fear least they should lose Ground with the People, and draw the Odium of ill Men upon them? Must the *Foundations of all Religion*, a good Life, and the promoting of that, give way to the Interest of *particular Schemes of Separation and Party*? Be not deceived, God is not to be mock'd; he is

1 Sam. 2. 30. a jealous God; and *those that honour him he will honour, and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed*. The best way therefore to make God your Friend, that *the Liberty of Conscience*, which
you

you enjoy may, by his Providence, be continued and secured to you, is to join sincerely and vigorously in the Work of Reformation, and shew yourselves zealous for his Honour, and sacrifice all your little Party-Interests to the promoting of his Glory, and pushing forward the Reputation of Virtue.

Eul. You Two may agree the *obj.* XXIV. Matter as you please, with Respect to the *Dissenters*: But in my Opinion it would still be best, both for *them* and *us*, and every private Person, to be quiet. Let every Man attend to his own *Vices and Imperfections*, and reform himself; which I take for granted will be Work enough to keep him employed, without an invidious hunting for other Mens Failings. Our Saviour's Advice is, *First cast the Beam out of thine own Eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the Mote out of thy Brother's Eye.* *Matt. 7. 5.*

Phil. But that Advice supposes our Brother to have but a *Mote*, and us a *Beam*; i. e. as all Interpreters agree, that the *Failings and Infirmities* we reprehend in *him* are very much overbalanced by *gross and staring Vices* of *our own*. Now I granted you before, and shall as often as you demand it,

that the Reformer ought by no Means to be guilty himself of *the same*, as great, or greater Crimes than that which he brings to Punishment in another. But let me ask you, whether *prophane Swearing, Drunkenness, Lewdness, &c.* can pretend to the soft Name of *Motes*, or small and hardly discernable Failings? I dare say you will own them to be Sins of a more bulky Size, too visible to be concealed, and too scandalous to be passed by. And if so, they are no way concerned in this Text, and every one that is not himself guilty of the like Scandals is left at Liberty still either to reprove or bring them to Punishment, for any thing in our Saviour's Precept to the contrary. Reformation indeed ought to *begin at Home*, but it must *end abroad*. We ought to be careful in the first Place to leave no scandalous Blot upon our own Characters, nor to *indulge* or *allow* our selves in any *Failing, Infirmary, or Imperfection*: But that *all moral Imperfections* are first to be entirely conquered in our selves, before we make any Steps to suppress *the flaming Enormities* of others, is to *reverse* the Text, and think our selves bound to pluck out first *the Mote* in
our

our own Eye, before we meddle with
the Beam in another Man's.

Eul. What say you to St. Paul's ^{1Thess. 4. 11.}
Precept, that we should *study to be quiet,*
and to do our own Business? And to
St. Peter's Caution, *Let none of you suf-* ^{1 Pet. 4. 15.}
fer as a Murderer, as a Thief, or as an
Evil-doer, or as a Busie-body in other
Mens Matters.

Phil. I say, that for Two Reasons,
they are nothing at all to your Pur-
pose. *First*, because the Apostles
there level at such idle and imperti-
nent People, as neglect their proper
Business, to run about from House to
House, prying into the Secrets of par-
ticular Persons, and the Affairs of Fa-
milies, in which they are no way con-
cerned. A Temper too common at
this Day, but not at all applicable to
Informers against Vice and Immorali-
ty, who mind their own lawful Busi-
ness with as much Diligence as other
Men, and study to be quiet, and avoid
that idle Curiosity which the Apostles
speak against, from a serious Regard
to Piety and Conscience. And *Se-*
condly, because, with your good Leave,
it is a Part of their *Business* to bring
Vice to Punishment; a Business that
properly belongs to them, if the Glory
of

of God, the Honour of Religion, and the Good of Mankind be (as I'm sure they are) the peculiar Care and Business of a Christian. So that I must still insist upon it, that their Diligence in *informing* is Diligence in their *proper Business* (tho' it's true they get nothing by it in this World, but the Satisfaction of having done their Duty,) and therefore these Texts do not at all affect them. And if you will make it universally a Crime for one Man to concern himself with what another does, you must call *him* too a *Busiebody in other Mens Matters*, who endeavours to *make Peace* betwixt such as have been at Difference, to prevent a Man from killing himself, or to rescue a Traveller from the Hands of High-way-Men. Indeed ALL *Acts of Charity* imply in their very Nature an interposing in the Concerns of other Men; and since this Business of *informing* is a *Charity* too, pray give it the same Quarter and the same Reputation that other charitable Actions may pretend to.

Gal. 6. 4.

Chor. That Passage however in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, [Let every Man prove his own Work, for every Man shall bear his own Burden,] seems fairly

fairly to instruct us, not to concern our selves so much as you would have us with the Faults of others, but to take Care of our own; and the Reason he gives is a very plain one, that we shall answer at the Day of Judgment *only for our own Faults*, and not for those of others.

Phil. The Apostle is there beating down that *pharisaical PRIDE* of Righteousness, thro' which Men are apt to triumph over the Sins of others, and to value themselves for not being so bad as they. Therefore, says he, *Consider thy self, lest thou also be tempted; Gal. 6. 1, 3. and if any Man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* Then follow the Words which you cite; *But let every Man prove his own Work, and then shall he have rejoicing in HIMSELF, and not in another: For every Man shall bear his own Burden, q. d. "Don't think that the Sins "of your Neighbour will recommend "you to God, and that your Imperfe- "ctions will be skreened under the "greater Imperfections of another; but "take Care that your own Life and "Manners be good without flattering "your self in proud and censorious "Comparisons, and then you will "have*

“ have Reason to rejoice at the Day
 “ of Judgment, that YOU YOUR
 “ SELF was truly virtuous, and not
 “ only that you was so much BET-
 “ TER than your NEIGHBOURS.

For *comparative Virtue* is not properly
our own; 'tis only an accidental Lustre
 arising from the Foil that stands by
 us; a meer *negative* Goodness, confi-
 sting in this, that we are *not so bad*
as others: Whereas that, by which we
 shall be examined, at the last Day, is
positive; the Character of *our own pro-*
per Actions, arising from the inherent
 moral Quality of them. By *these*, says
 the Apostle, we shall be determined;
 for every Man SHALL certainly bear
 his own Burden, MUST ASSURED-
 LY answer for what HIMSELF has
 done, however others may be better
 or worse than he. The Text cannot
 mean, that I shall answer for *no Body's*
 Sins but my own; for in several Cases,
 such an Assertion would contradict
 other Parts of Scripture, which plain-
 ly tell us, that *we may* be called to
 answer for the Sins of others, which
 we do not endeavour to prevent, so
 far as it lies in our Power to do. So
 the same Apostle warns Timothy, ---Be

1 Tim. 5. 22. *not Partaker of other Mens Sins, keep*
thy

thy self pure : And God tells the Prophet Ezekiel, *If thou dost not speak to warn* Ezek. 33. 8. *the Wicked from his way, that wicked Man shall die in his Iniquity, but his Blood will I require at thy Hands.* But if you will have the Text to signifie more, *viz.* That no Man shall answer for any but *his own* Sins, you must remember too, that by neglecting to do what in us lies to hinder others in their vicious Courses, we make *their* Sins *our own*; and therefore are still not (properly) supposed to answer for what **THEY** did, but for **O U R O W N S I N**, in not endeavouring to put a Stop to their Wickedness. For against that *unchristian Narrowness of Spirit*, (give me leave to call it so, for so it is,) that *lazy and uncharitable Thought*, that we have nothing to do to reform others, but are to confine our Care to our own Morals, I must declare, (and I will stand by it) that *Industry and Zeal for the Good of Mankind* is as much a Christian Duty, if Scripture may be acknowledged for a *Rule of Duty*, as either Devotion, Chastity, Temperance, Justice, or any thing else; and if Nature and Reason may determine, 'tis as much the Duty of a *Man*, as of a *Christian*. For humane
So.

Society is but a public Combination or Agreement to do one another *all the Good we can*. And is my Neighbour's Religion, and *Virtue*, and *eternal Happiness*, an Interest below that of his Trade, his Reputation, or the *petty Occasions of his Family*? Why then is our Concern for him so absurdly swallowed up in Trifles? while, assisting him only in his *temporal*, and declining to assist him in his *eternal* Interests, the true Language of all that Civility and good Neighbourhood we profess, is, that we are ready to do him *any Good*, but the *greatest*; and to serve him upon *all Occasions*, but *the best*. As for the Sense of *Scripture* in this Matter, the endeavouring to reform him from his vicious Practices, bears as great a Stress as any Virtue, or any Part of Charity whatsoever. What else can be the

Lev. 19. 17. Meaning of that Text, *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart, thou shalt in any wise [or by all Means] rebuke thy Neighbour, and NOT SUFFER Sin upon him?* And what think you of these other Precepts in the New-Testament?

1Thess. 5. 14. --- Warn them that are unruly or disorderly; --- Exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin; --- Consider one another to

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provoke to Love, and to good Works; --- Charity seeks not her own, (i. e. not only 1 Cor. 13. 5.
her own Benefit, but that of others too; and accordingly St. Paul elsewhere directs us, Look not every Man on his own Phil. 2. 4.
things only, but every Man also on the things of others. Now if it be the Meaning of all this, that we should let the World go as it will, and be concerned no further than for our own personal Virtue and Goodness, then I must own my self in the Wrong: But if they plainly lay an Obligation upon us, to do what we can to make our Neighbour also good and virtuous, you will be convinced, I hope, that a prudent Zeal for the Reformation of others is as much a Duty as the Care of our own Behaviour.

Chor. I believe we shall neither of us dispute that Point with you any further. We shall own it to be our Duty, to promote the spiritual as well as temporal Benefit of our Neighbour: But pray, Sir, what Method does the Scripture direct for doing this? I *obj. XXV.*
 don't find that it obliges us *to inform the Magistrate, and have Offenders punished.* REPROOF and good Advice are (for ought I see) the only Duties
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towards their Reformation urged upon us there.

Eul. Right: For the Apostle commands indeed to *WARN* them that are unruly and immoral; but says not a Word of bringing them to Punishment. And in another Place, *If any one be overtaken in a Fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness;* which seems directly to exclude it.

Gal. 6. 1.

Phil. But, Gentlemen, you won't be angry, if I tell you, in the first Place, you're both mistaken; because, in the next, I hope to prove you so. *Warn* them that are unruly, or any other Text that presses the Duty of Admonition and Reproof, does not thereby exclude severer Methods, when Severities are necessary. And as to your second Text, which you take to be still more to your Purpose; (1.) It only relates to such as are OVERTAKEN in a Fault, surprized, thro' Infirmary, against the settled Bent of their Wills, and the general Course of a good Life; but this is nothing to the lewd, profane, and drunken Debauchee, the notorious and common Offender. (2.) If it were, yet *the Penalties*, assigned by our Laws, against Vice and Prophaneness (pardon the Repetition of this Argument, *I* lay some

some Strefs upon it,) are so very small, that they are consistent enough in all Reason with *the Spirit of MEEKNESS*, and are rather to be accounted gentle Warnings than Punishments. But to come directly to your Assertion, *Choristus*, that the Scripture puts us upon no other Method of reforming than *Reproof* and *good Advice*; give yourself a little Freedom of Thought, and go along with me in the following Reflexions. Do you grant me first, that whatever may be proved to be our Duty by fair and rational *Consequence* from Scripture, is as really commanded, as if it had been laid down there *in so many Words*?

Chor. Yes sure; or else we should be very much to seek in many Cases of unquestionable Duty. A great deal is to be drawn from comparing one Text with another, and extracting Particulars from Generals.

Phil. Very well; consider (1.) then, what St. Paul says, *All the Law is fulfilled Gal. 5. 14. in this, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* Since therefore I am obliged to do all I can to keep *my self* from Sin, I am also by this Rule to do all I can to keep *my Neighbour* from it.

Chor.

Chor. But I hope you won't say that I am bound to *inform against* my self, and have my self *punished*; and therefore neither am I obliged to take this Course for the Reformation of others.

Phil. I produce it only to prove this general Point, that I am to use *my utmost Endeavour* to suppress Sin in others, out of the same charitable Concern for *their* eternal Interest that I have, or ought to have for *my own*. And from this general Obligation I deduce the Particular, that if Reproof and Admonition will not do, then *Punishment* must be tried; as by a due Parallel in my own Case; if I find the Corruption of my Nature so strong, that I cannot, through *Consideration* and *Reflexion* only, get the Conquest of a vicious Habit, I am bound to PUNISH my self by *Mortifications* and *religious Severities*.

Eul. Have you nothing more directly to your Purpose than this?

Phil. --- A little Patience, Sir, and you will see. We are taught by our
 Matt. 6. 9, 10. Lord, to pray that *the Name* of God may be *hallowed*, (i. e. sanctified, or revered, treated as an awful and sacred thing;) that his *Kingdom* may come, (may gain Ground and be promoted

moted in the World;) that his *Will* may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven, (his Commands obeyed, and all his holy Laws observed.) Now it is granted on all Hands, that what we are bound to *pray for*, we are also bound to *endeavour after* to the utmost of our Power. We are to pray that God may be glorified, Virtue promoted, Vice suppressed, and our vicious Neighbour reformed; and therefore we are to do our utmost that all this may be *effectually brought about*; for otherwise, our Prayers are but idle Words, or faint and hypocritical Wishes. If then I am obliged to pray, that the Name of God may be *reverenced*, the same Scripture by Consequence binds me not to suffer it to be *prophaned*, so long as I have *any Method left* (and certainly our Laws have pointed us out a Method) to prevent it. Being bound also to pray, *Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done*, &c. that same lays an Obligation upon me to advance the Kingdom of Christ, to beat down that of Satan, and to suppress, to the utmost of my Power, that Rebellion wicked Men are guilty of by their Vices against the Authority, the Will, and Laws of our Redeemer. And can we

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be said to do this *to the UTMOST* of our Power, when (finding that Reproof won't do) we yet refuse to take the way by which the Laws of our Country have enabled us to attempt it further?

Eul. I am not thoroughly clear in your Notion of *the Kingdom of Christ*. I take the Kingdom of Christ to mean no more than the Propagation of Christianity, so far as concerns his Kingdom in this present World.

Phil. Pardon me, Sir; by the Kingdom of Christ, with respect to the Opposition made to it by the Kingdom of Satan, is plainly meant, not only the Propagation of *Christianity* (as the only true System of Religion) in the World; but also the Propagation of *Virtue* and *Piety*, as the grand Design which our Lord proposed to himself in publishing this Scheme of Religion. So in like Manner, by the opposite Interests of Satan, is meant, not only *Heathenism*, *Atheism*, and *Idolatry*; but also the great End he drives at in all these, the making Men *lewd*, and *vicious*, and *prophane*, that he may keep up a standing Rebellion against God, and bring us to the same Destruction with himself. And thus the Kingdom
of

of Christ being *the Prevalence of Virtue*, (because his Authority appears then to be received, when his Laws are submitted to and obeyed ;) and the Kingdom of Satan being *the prevailing Power of Wickedness*, (because that is what he most industriously propagates in the World ;) it must follow, that the doing what we can that Piety and Virtue may flourish, is promoting the Kingdom of *Christ* ; and using our utmost Endeavours that Vice and Prophaneness may be suppressed, is fighting against the Kingdom of *Satan*.

Chor. Well, Sir, proceed to your other Arguments from Scripture.

Phil. I have several of them still behind ; and having explained to you what is meant by those two different Kingdoms and Interests spoken of above, the next thing I ought to endeavour, is to convince you, that (as they are never to be reconciled, being directly opposite the one to the other,) so there must be *no halting beewixt God and Baal*. For, says our Saviour, *He that is not with me is against me, and he that GATHERS not with me, scatters abroad*. He looks upon such as *Enemies* to his Kingdom, who will not join their Endeavours to promote it.

Matt. 12.30

No Neutrality will be allowed in this War: He that contributes not vigorously *to suppress*, contributes *to encourage* Sin.

Eul. And by the same Rule, methinks, he that contributes not to encourage Sin, contributes to suppress it: For our Saviour says in another Place,
Mark 9. 40. *He that is not against us is on our Part.*

Phil. True; and both these Maxims are the same; because, as I said before, there will be no Neutrality allowed; or rather, there *can* be no such thing as a Neutrality in this Contest. The whole World is divided into two great Parties, for *Christ*, or for *his Adversary*; and therefore says our Lord, *He that is not with me is against me; --- and he that is not against us, is with us, or on our Part*; which are but the two convertible Branches of one and the same Rule. I will grant you, that he who does not any way contribute to *encourage* and *promote* Sin, contributes something to *suppress* it: But then 'tis to be remembred, that by sitting still, and declining to join *actively* on God's Side against it, you *do* contribute to encourage and promote it. For by refusing your Aid toward the *punishing* of Vice and
 Wick-

Wickedness, you plainly give your Vote, that they should *be let alone*, and consequently *go on*, and *flourish*; you weaken the Party that would suppress them; you discourage them in their Endeavours, and render them less able (for want of your Assistance) to compleat the Conquest; you add Spirit and Vigour to the Enemy, when wicked Men perceive, even those that pretend to Virtue, either so careless that they will not, or so fearful that they dare not take up Arms against them, tho' the Laws of the Country are on our Side. Now all the Ground which Virtue and Religion *lose* by your Inactivity, Vice *will gain*: So that you do really *promote* Vice (tho' it be not in your Intention so to do,) by *doing nothing to suppress it*.

Eul. You surprize me, *Philaretus*; but I must own that what you say is reasonable.

Phil. I'm glad you are so far convinced; but however, to go on. When the *Israelites* were fallen to Idolatry, *Moses* (their chief Magistrate) called to the People, *who is on the Lord's Side?* *Exod. 32.26,*
let him come unto me: --- put every Man 27.
his Sword by his Side, and go in and out,
from Gate to Gate, throughout the Camp,

and slay every Man his Brother, and every Man his Companion, and every Man his Neighbour.

Chor. What has this Text to do with *Informing*? *Moses* needed not then to be informed of their Rebellion; for he was about to punish it.

Phil. It proves the general Point which I produce it for; that private Persons, called upon by the Magistrate, ought to assist him in bringing Sin to Punishment; or else, 'tis certain, they are not on the Lord's Side. And from this General, 'tis easie, by your own Allowance, to deduce Particulars. The Queen, our supreme Magistrate, seems to call to us, in Her Proclamation against Vice and Prophaneness, as *Moses* did to the *Israelites*, who is on the Lord's side? She there strictly charges and commands (not only Her Judges, Justices of the Peace, &c. but) *ALL OTHER* her Subjects, to be very vigilant and strict in the Discovery, and effectual Prosecution, and Punishment of those Practices, as they will answer it to Almighty God. And therefore we cannot refuse to assist in bringing Vice to Punishment, without declaring our selves against both God and the Government at the same Time. Against GOD, in that we will not join

join our selves with those that *are of his Side*, and call for our Assistance to suppress the Rebellion of wicked Men against him: against the GOVERNMENT, by refusing to obey the Commands of our Prince, and in Effect, disowning our selves to be Her Subjects. I argue then *from the Text*, that where the Magistrate is willing to punish Vice, it is the Subject's Duty to assist him; and *from the Proclamation*, that Her Majesty *is* thus willing, and *does* call to us to assist Her Ministers of Justice, that it may be effectually done; and the Conclusion from these Premisses I leave you your self to draw.

Eul. This Argument implies our Duty, when the Magistrate *calls* and *invites us* to assist: But what if our Princes should not always shew the same Concern for Piety and Virtue? Or inferior Magistrates neither desire our Help, nor give us any Command or Encouragement to assist them?

Phil. The *Laws* continue still upon the File against Prophaneness and Immorality; let us stick to *them*, tho' the Magistrate should be so forgetful of his Duty, as not to encourage and demand our Aid. We are not to be frightened with the Imputation of *For-*

Isa. 39. 4.

wardness in such a Case: For 'tis worth observing, that amongst the Causes of God's Judgments upon the Jews, the Prophet *Isaiah* reckons this, that *none CALLETH FOR Justice*. It seems, if Magistrates be supine and slothful in suppressing Vice, we are bound to *put them in Mind* of their Office, to bring Offenders, or Informations against Offenders to them, and to CALL FOR Justice, that they may be punished. For tho' part of the Context seems to refer this to the Case of Injuries and Oppressions betwixt Man and Man, it appears to me most reasonably to be accounted by the Prophet there as *a distinct Crime*, without any special Relation to those that were reckoned up before; and rather to concern Offences of Prophaneness, &c. against God: Because when Men are *injured and oppressed*, their Pride and Passion, their Interest, or Necessity, will drive them fast enough to complain; and tho' their Oppressors should be so powerful, and the Seat of Judgment so corrupt, that no Body should be found to DO Justice, 'tis hardly to be imagined, that no Body should be found to CALL for it. But in Cases where *the Honour of God and*
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Religion is concerned, apart from particular Interest, People are generally too cold in calling for Justice; and therefore 'tis most probable that *this* was it the Prophet complains of. There is another Place in *Jeremiah* to the same Purpose; where *He* also lays it down as one Provocation amongst others, which would assuredly draw down the Wrath of God upon his Country, that *they OVERPASSED* the *Deeds of the Wicked*; the plain Meaning of which seems to be, that the Punishment of Vice was neglected;---
And shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?

Jer. 5. 28.

Ver. 29.

Chor. That may concern *Magistrates* only, and not private Persons.

Phil. The Seventy translate *Kai παρέρβηναι κρίσιν*, they *pass over Judgment*, take no Notice of Offences to have them punished. But *κρίσις* signifies not only JUDGMENT, but ACCU-

Scapula in
Lexico.

Prov. 28, 4.

Now

Now I desire to know, what can be meant here by *contending with* them, but opposing their vicious Practices to the utmost, reproof, and bringing them to Punishment, without Fear or Favour. *Contending* is a Word that naturally implies a *vigorous* and *active Application* in suppressing Wickedness, and can never be reconciled with a few melancholy *Complaints* of the Corruption of the Age, and a few lazy *Wishes* that it were amended. And the Word is so general too that it takes in *all sorts* of lawful Methods by which the Suppression of Vice may be effected; not only Prayer, Reproof, good Example, and the like; but *Information* and *Punishment* also: For contending, as it implies a Zeal *resolutely bent* to effect the Good proposed, implies a Diligence in embracing and improving *every* way that may contribute thereto. And this you see is expected by God from *all such as keep the Law*; their own personal Virtue will not excuse them from contending with, reproof, and bringing to Punishment the Vices of others. Those whom the royal Moralist speaks of here, are plainly *private*, as well as public Persons; those (without any other

other Distinction) *that keep the Law*, the whole Body of virtuous and sober Men. And to shew that the New-Testament is not wanting on the same Side, the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, charges the Christians, to whom he wrote, *to look diligently, lest any Root of Bitterness spring up amongst them, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any Fornicator or prophane Person, &c.* Now this Direction was evidently given to the whole Christian Community; and I think 'tis very full to our Purpose. For here *every Man* is set as a Watch or Sentinel against Immorality and Vice, is commanded to look *diligently* to it that no ill Practices be suffered to bring a Scandal upon Religion, no ill Examples that may corrupt and poison others; Examples in Wickedness being ever fatal and infectious; and the Apostle particularly instances in *Lewdness* and *Prophaneness*, which he requires them carefully to suppress. I ask you then, whether appealing by Informations to the Laws of our Country, that Vice may be suppressed, is not a most direct fulfilling of this Rule of Scripture, a *looking diligently, lest any Root of Bitterness spring up to trouble us, and thereby many be defiled?*

Heb. 12. 15.
16.

filed? Can any thing more fully answer this Injunction of the Apostle then such a Conduct?

Eul. But perhaps all this may be done without appealing to the Laws; as by Advice and Reproof.

Phil. But where Advice and Reproof will not do, as it is plain by Experience they will not with the Majority (perhaps Nine Parts in Ten) of Offenders, you can never come up to what this Text enjoins you, without severer Methods. For what I observed before upon another Text, must be observed of this too, there is a particular *Strength* and *Heat* in the Expression; *Looking DILIGENTLY lest any Root of Bitterness spring up; lest there be ANY Fornicator or prophane Person, &c.* which is but in other Words to say, Be sure you suffer no such thing, but show your selves *active* and *industrious to the utmost*, to suppress the Growth of Vice; which surely must imply somewhat more effectual to prevent it than the gentle Whispers of Reproof and Admonition. However, if you be not yet convinced of the Extent of this Text let St. Paul himself explain it by another.

1 Cor. 5. 2. He charges it upon the *Corinthians*,
as

as a very gross Neglect, that they had not endeavoured that the incestuous Person should be TAKEN AWAY from amongst them. The Reason he gives for it is, that *a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump*, one ill Example unpunished may be very dangerous; therefore, says he, PURGE OUT the old Leaven, &c. PUT AWAY from among your selves that wicked Person; and accordingly in the same Chapter he pronounces the Sentence of Excommunication against him.

1 Cor. 5. 6.

Ver. 7.

Ver. 13.

Ver. 3, 4, 5.

Eul. But he does not order him to be brought to the *civil Magistrate*.

Phil. True; because the Laws of the Empire then took little Notice of those Vices, and therefore those of the Church must. But that is not our Case: We have *temporal* Laws against Immorality and Prophaneness, as well as *Ecclesiastical* Canons. The Sword of Discipline with *us* has Two Edges, with *them* it had but one, but both were designed for the Punishment of Offenders. My Argument therefore from this Text, is, that Debauchery and Vice are not only to be reprov'd, but *punished*; that this is the most effectual way to *prevent the Poison of ill Examples*; and that *private Persons* (or

(or the whole Body of the Church without Distinction) are obliged to bring such vicious Wretches to Punishment; for St. *Paul* charges *them* with a Crime in neglecting it.

Chor. I must acknowledge, this is very Home to the Purpose, that Offenders in Vice and Immorality ought to be *punished*, and that private Persons ought to *bring them* to Punishment: Yet methinks it chiefly prescribes Church-Discipline for the Method.

Phil. Remember, you granted me, that in proving a Duty from Scripture, Particulars are to be drawn from Generals. Now the general Position here, is *Punishment*, and that to be sure must be according to the Laws that prevail amongst us, whether Temporal or Spiritual. This general Position therefore I branch into Particulars (according to your own Allowance,) and say, that since we have both Civil and Ecclesiastical Laws to punish Vice, we *may* bring it under the Lash of either, and *must* have it punished by the one or the other. But I will argue further upon this, from the Command of our Saviour, --- *Tell it to the Church.*

Matt. 18. 17.

Eul. What do you mean, *Philaretus*? This is directly against you.

Phil.

Phil. Pardon me, Sir, you'll find it is not when you *consider* the Text. I argue from hence in the (1.) Place, That where Reproof will not do, severer Methods are enjoined; *if he will not* Matt. 18. 15,
hear thee, take with thee one or two more; 16, 17.
---- if he will not hear them, tell it to the Church; and this is in order to public Censure and Excommunication if he be obstinate. (2.) That our Saviour thought it just and necessary (foreseeing that Reproof would often miss of its due Effect, thro' the Pride and Carelessness, and corrupt Affections of Men,) to lodge somewhere or other a *coercive* or *punishing* Power, that might keep a stricter Rein upon them. Now for the Reason I gave you before, the Appeal against Vice and Prophaneness could not then be lodged with the civil Magistrate, the Authority of the State being in *Heathen* 1 Cor. 6. 1,
Hands, to whom if Christians had by *&c.*
such Informations, exposed the Vices and Defects of their Fellow-Christians, it would have given a Scandal to Christianity, and have made the Enemies of the Cross of Christ to triumph; and therefore our Saviour directs to *tell it to the Church.* But the Magistracy professing now our
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Isa. 49. 23.

own Religion; *Kings* being become the *nursing Fathers*, and *Queens* the *nursing Mothers* of the Church, according to the Prophecy of *Isaiah*; the civil State being now assisting with its temporal Power to the Church, for Reformation of Manners, and the Punishment of Vice; why will not this Direction extend to telling the *civil Magistrate* of the Offence, as well as telling it to the Church? When we have Two Powers given to assist us, 'twould be ridiculous to throw one of them aside.

Chor. But there is a Limitation in the Text, which I think spoils all your Scheme. It does not relate to Offences against GOD, but against *ourselves*; if thy Brother trespass against THEE.

Phil. Under Favour, you're mistaken, I believe, in that, consider the Context. In Verse 7. our Saviour speaks against Offences or Scandals to Religion; and I'm sure, if Vice and Immorality be not such Scandals, nothing is or can be. He cautions us, *Verses* 8, 9, and 10. to avoid these, that we may not draw weak Persons into Sin by our Example, or give them a Distast to Religion by the undue Liberties which we, pretending to be Christians,

Christians, allow our selves in. Then in the Four Verses following, he presses that Care upon us by the Argument of his own earnest Desire to save all Men, and the great Joy he has in the Recovery of any one from his Sins. Then follows, *Verses 15.*

*Moreover, i. e. if then * thy Brother trespass against thee, &c.* the plain Meaning of which must therefore be, by thus comparing it with the Context :

“ If thy Fellow-Christian be guilty of
“ any Scandal to Religion, any vicious Practice that offends thee, *tell it to the Church.* So that you see they are not meer private Injuries that are here spoken of, but the *Vices* and *Scandals* of our Neighbour.

Chor. I did not consider things so far indeed, but laying all together, I must allow your Application of this Text.

Phil. Well, you give me the more Encouragement to go on. Remembring still your just and necessary Concession of drawing Particulars from Generals, let me ask you both, do you own this Work of promoting Reformation of Manners, by the Execution of the Laws against Vice to be in the Nature of it a GOOD WORK?

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Chor.

Chor. You make such use of Concessions, that I have no mind to allow you any thing for the future till you have proved it.

Eul. I am of the same mind: Let us have no begging of the Question; prove your Point, and then we'll grant it you.

That will be easily done (said *Philaretus* smiling;) for I have proved already that *it may do Good*; and whatsoever is likely to do Good is, I think, *a Good Work*. But I find you begin to be out of Humour with the Dispute; which is a Sign that you have little more to say in it, and rather *would not* be convinced, than *are not*. If giving Informations, and putting forward the Execution of the Laws have already done much good in other Places (and consequently may do here) towards suppressing the Impudence of Impiety and Vice; if it may preserve us from national Judgments; if it be for the public Reputation of Religion and Virtue, a public Testimony of our Respect to God, and to his Honour; if it be (as certainly it is) an Endeavour to advance his Glory, by putting a Stop to the outrageous Prophaneness that every Day affronts him, to the Blaf-

Blasphemy that very often denies him, and to the Neglect of his Worship, which once a Week disowns him, to that Intemperance and Lewdness which every where tramples upon the Authority of his Laws; if it may prevent the Poison of ill Examples, and thereby at once preserve the Virtue of this and of the next Generation; if it may probably contribute to reclaim the Offender himself, or at least deter many others from the Practice of Vice; and if none but the Devil and wicked Men oppose it, as I have proved at large before, it must surely be a *good Work*, and worthy of a Christian.

Chor. You may save your self any further Trouble, Sir, I shall own it.

Eul. And so shall I; ---- but how do you reduce this to a *scriptural* Argument?

Phil. Why thus; the Suppression of Vice by the Execution of the Laws against it being confessedly a *good Work*, the Scripture binds us to be *always zealously affected in it*, always ready to do our utmost towards it. *It is good* (says the Apostle) *to be ZEALOUSLY affected ALWAYS in a good Thing.* Put them in Mind to obey Magistrates,

Col. 1. 10.

gistrates, to be ready to EVERY good Work. --- Fruitful in EVERY good Work. Now what way has a private Christian left him to shew his Zeal and Readiness in this particular good Work of *punishing Vice*, but by giving Informations to the Magistrate?

Eul. I am very well satisfied by your Discourse, and the Reflections I have made within my self upon it, that as Prophaneness and Debauchery have, thro' the too easie Temper of good Men, and Negligence of ill Magistrates, arrived at the Impudence with which we see them flourish now, there is a Necessity that the Sword of Justice should be drawn to curb them. I am satisfied too, without any further Cavils, that the giving Informations against Vice, that it may be effectually suppress'd, is a good and excellent Work; and if it were vigorously pursued, might have very happy Consequences, public and private. But tho' I acknowledge Informations of this kind to be necessary; yet methinks there is no need for *every private Person* to throw himself into Arms upon this Occasion, as a Volunteer; when the Laws have otherwise made Provision, by pressing inferior Offi-

obj. XXVI.

Officers into this very Service. You know, that *Constables* and *Church-Wardens* are bound, by the Nature of their Office, and by several Statutes and Canons, to enquire after Offences of Immorality and Impiety, and to bring Offenders to the proper Courts to be punished. What Occasion then have others, who have no such Office upon them, to intermeddle? Since those are to be found in every Parish, and are publicly authorized and required by Law to inform.

Chor. I think you have started a very proper Objection; and therefore, pray *Philaretus*, give us your Judgment upon it.

Phil. But, Gentlemen, is it not very hard, that we who pretend to be Christians, will do nothing for the Love and Service of our God, but where the Laws of the State *oblige* us? Is it not hard, that when the *Devil* sets up his Standard, Volunteers in Impiety and Vice shall flock to it by Thousands; whole Parishes shall freely list themselves; Persons of both Sexes, and all Ages and Qualities, readily engage in that accursed Service of defeating the Ends for which our Saviour died, of practising Wicked-

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ness,

ness, and beating down Religion and Virtue? And at the same time, when *God, Religion, and Virtue*, come to levy *their* Recruits, and offer such noble Rewards as the Pleasure of doing Good in this World, and everlasting Happiness in the next, not a Man shall stir without Compulsion, not one Voluntier to be found in a Country, and we think it enough to press Two or Three careless and unwilling Persons (under the Notion of public Officers) in a Parish, who are of Course to be discharged at the Year's End? For Shame, Gentlemen, what's become of the Zeal and Generosity of *Christians*, if this be all we can find in our Hearts to do to maintain the Honour of God and Religion?

Chor. The Question which attends your Answer, is, whether the Laws of the State, providing not only Magistrates to punish, but inferior Officers to present and inform, do not thereby design that no Body else should interfere?

Phil. You strangely mistake them then. The Constable is bound by his Office to *apprehend a Felon*, the Law requires it of him, and he is sworn to it: But I hope any Body else may seize

seize him if he can, without any Affront to the Staff of Authority. The Constable is sworn also to *suppress Affrays* and *keep the Peace*; but is every Body else, do you think, forbidden by that to part a Quarrel, if the Constable either is not present, or neglects his Duty? Parish Officers are required by the Statute to bring in Persons proper for Her Majesties Service in the Army; but if they be negligent, may not any Body else complain, and give in to the Commissioners the Names of such idle Fellows as they think to be within the Description of the Act, tho' the Constable and his Brethren have a Mind to favour them? Yes sure, and the Officers shall be fined for their Neglect too. The Design of the Law therefore in charging it upon Constables and Church-Wardens to present Offences of Immorality, and to bring the Offenders to due Punishment, was the better to secure its Execution, and provide for the Suppression of ill Practices, by laying *some* in every Parish under the solemn Obligation of *an Oath* to look after it, making it their *particular* Duty, by their *Office*; lest otherwise People being left at large to those general Ob-

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ligations, which few have the Grace to consider, the giving Notice of Offences should be shifted off from one to another, and no Body would inform at all. It never intended to discharge private Persons from those Ties which I have proved upon them, to do their utmost in suppressing Vice and Prophaneness; but only takes Care, that however they may neglect the Prosecution of these Matters, it shall be *bound upon* some in every Place by a *double Tie*, as exacted from them by the *Authority of the Government* also; and whom can *the Government* properly oblige to this, but such Parish Officers as are appointed for the Execution of the Laws in other Cases? I will add further, that as the appointing such Officers to give Information against Vice does not, in the Meaning of the LAW, exclude private Persons from this Service: So neither does it excuse them from the same in Point of CONSCIENCE. For the Care of bringing Offenders to Punishment is in Scripture laid upon the *Community*, upon every particular Person, whether public or private, whether in or out of
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of Office. THOU shalt not suffer a Witch to live. ---- Then shalt THOU enquire, and make Search, and ask diligently, &c. ---- Then shalt THOU bring forth that Man, or that Woman, (which have committed the wicked thing,) unto thy Gates, (i. e. to the Magistrate) and have them punished as the Law directs. I hope to establish this afresh by Arguments from Reason (as I have already given you several fair Deductions from Scripture,) to prove it the Duty and Business of every Christian to bring Prophaneness and Vice under the Censure of the Laws; and when you are disposed to hear them, you shall have them.

Exod. 22. 18.

Deut. 13. 14.

Deut. 17. 5.

Bp. Patrick
in locum.

Eul. Allow me first another Word or two upon the present Objection. Acknowledging what you say, that it does not preclude others; yet since these public Officers are provided for this Purpose, why may not they be sufficient?

Phil. To convince you that they are not; look abroad into all your Parishes, and see how scandalously Swearing and Cursing, Drunkenness and Lewdness, Neglect of the public Worship of God, and Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, prevail

vail amongst them, in spite of this Provision. The Reason is, your Constables and Church-Wardens have for the most Part little or no Sense of the *Obligation* which their Oath lays upon them, taking it only for a thing of Course and Form. The greatest Part of them too (in the Country at least) are extremely ignorant of their Duty, and of the Power which the Law has given them in these Matters, thro' long Disuse, and the Carelessness of Magistrates in not instructing them better. Beside all this, they are chosen promiscuously by their Parish, without any Regard had to their own Morals, every Inhabitant being to take these Offices in their Turn: Now if the Officers themselves (as too frequently they are) be prophane and debauched, can you expect any Zeal in *them* for Reformation? Consider again, that tho' their own Morals should be tolerable, yet looking upon their Office as a *Burden*, they will endeavour to make it as easie, and give as little Trouble to themselves as they can; being pressed *unwillingly* into the Service, they have no Inclination to be vigorous and hearty in it; and being chosen only for a *Year*, they are
afraid

afraid of being strict upon the Faults of the Neighbourhood, lest they should lose the good Will of their Neighbours, and expose themselves to the Revenge of those that are to succeed them. Now upon a fair View of the Case, I believe you will own, that if we desire in earnest to have Vice suppressed, something more must be done than Experience will give us leave to hope from Constables and Church-Wardens; and that *other* Hands must join in that important Work, or very little Progress will be made.

Chor. Now, Sir, if you please to advance your Arguments from *Reason*, to prove this a Duty upon us, we desire to hear 'em.

Phil. I am sensible, upon Recollection of those Arguments, that *some* of them have been already hinted before, in the Course of our Conversation on this Subject: But I will take the Liberty to put you again in Mind of them as briefly as I can, that such Arguments being laid together may make the deeper Impression.

First then, we are bound to do all *Arg. I.*
the Good we can to our Neighbours, with respect both to their temporal and eternal Interest, and to prevent as much

much as in us lies *any* Damage that may accrue to them in either; and the same Care and Affection which we owe to our Neighbourhood, we owe also to the public Society, or Nation, of which we are Members. If therefore Reformation of Manners, in the way which I propose, be a *real Advantage*, and the unrestrained Practice of Vice *prejudicial* in all these Respects, it will be undeniably the Duty of every Christian to do what I am perswading you to. Now Vice unrestrained, or in other Words, an unreformed Life, leading Men as certainly to Hell and everlasting Misery, as there is a God in Heaven or Truth in God, must doubtless be a very great Mischief to *the Soul* of the Offender, tho' he himself be so blinded with Passion and depraved Affections, as not to be sensible of it for the present. Is it not our Duty then to interpose, and try if we can *prevent* this exceeding Damage, by putting him in Mind of his Sin, and trying to reduce him to Religion and Virtue (to which, I have proved before, the gentle Punishments inflicted by our Laws may contribute very much,) since this Life is all the Opportunity we have for

for such a charitable Office ; and if he passes unreformed into the next, his Misery is fixed upon him for ever ? But beside this, there are other Mischiefs, (of less Consequence indeed, but Mischiefs still,) that follow Wickedness in this *present* Life. Are not Drunkenness and Lewdness destructive to his *natural Constitution*, to his Health and Strength ? Do they not introduce several Diseases, which are often propagated from him to his Posterity ? Do they not debauch and effeminate *his Mind*, and render him careless of Business, and unfit for it ? And is it not our Duty, think you, upon *this* Score, to endeavour, by reforming or restraining him, to prevent as much as in us lies the Prejudices of this kind which he and his may suffer by ? You will readily account it a Charity and a Duty, if he be sick, to give him your best Assistance for his Recovery : And why not also to preserve his Health while he has it, or prevent the Distempers he may fall into by such Courses as will bring them on ? Again, are not both those Vices, I mention'd, and another (too common) that may be added, I mean, *Gaming*, a considerable Damage to his *Estate* ?
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Must not his Family, as well as himself, suffer by these extravagant Expences? And is it not then a Piece of Charity, and by Consequence a Duty, to restrain him in these things? If it happen to be in your Power to warn him of a *Cheat* designed to be put upon him, or to tell him of a *good Bargain*, or to put him in a way of *improving his Estate*, or of *saving Money*, I dare say, you would think yourself bound in Conscience and good Neighbourhood to do it: Why, this is the very Case before us. By keeping the Man temperate, sober, chaste, and frugal, you certainly put him in a better Capacity of improving what he has, and saving his Money; you prevent many Cheats that are like to be put upon him in Gaming, and many a foolish Bargain he would make over a Bottle, and by leaving him his Prudence and his Brains at Command, (which when he is in Drink, he has not) you put him in a way to buy and sell to more Advantage. That unrestrained Vice is highly prejudicial to *the Public* also, was insisted upon before [Page 8, 9, 10, 49.]: The Consideration of which, one would think, were enough to satisfy us,

us, that we shall be little better than *Traitors to our Country*, if we endeavour not to prevent all those Inconveniencies and Mischiefs to it, which must follow upon our Negligence in having Vice corrected.

My next Argument from Reason *Arg. II.* shall be this; That the best Laws are *to no Purpose* without Informations given upon them, that such as break them may be punished: Common Sense will tell us this. Now I dare say, you will readily own, that 'tis the Duty of every Government to take Care of the Honour of God, by *providing* good Laws for the Suppression of Vice; and the Duty of every subordinate Magistrate to *put those Laws in Execution*; and since the Laws cannot be executed upon Offenders, except their Offences come to the Knowledge of the Magistrate in a legal way, does not *his Duty to punish* naturally imply it to be *our's* (who see, and hear, and can be Evidence of such Offences) *to give him Information*? Surely, Gentlemen, 'tis a very idle thing for any Man to complain of the Corruption of the Age, who won't do his best to mend it; to wish for and applaud Magistrates that will be faithful

faithful in suppressing Vice, who won't do any thing to assist them in it, that the Law may have its due Effect.

Obj. XXVII. *Eul.* But with your Leave, a Justice of Peace may punish *without* an Information: For 'tis to be supposed he has Eyes and Ears about him, as well as *we*; and all the World, I think, ought to excuse *him*; because what *he* does in punishing Vice, is *ex officio*, and he is bound to it by his Oath.

Phil. Sir, 'tis not *one* Offence in a *Thousand* that the Justice of Peace himself can be supposed to hear and see: Few People will be so imprudent as to swear or curse before him, or come drunk into his Presence, when they are sure to pay for it if they do. He may see and hear these things sometimes *by Chance*; but you have a better Opinion of the Modesty and Bashfulness of Vice, than I can have, if you think the World will be reformed by Accident. No, Sir, 'tis not an accidental Punishment now and then, that will put Impiety out of Countenance, and break a general vicious Practice: It must be a *vigorous* and *frequent* Execution of the Laws, which must extend a great deal further than the *personal Observation* of
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the Magistrate only can extend it. He must be assisted by the Industry and Faithfulness of private Persons in discovering and presenting Offences from every Quarter, that Wickedness may be *no where* safe, and Offenders may be convinced, that the Law corrects them for their VICES, and not for the ILL MANNERS only of Swearing and being drunk *before a Justice of Peace*, as perhaps they will be apt to think, if they never meet with Punishment but upon such Occasions.

My *Third* Argument shall be this; *Arg. III.* we certainly ought not to be more remiss in what concerns the Honour of God and Religion, than the temporal Rights of our Neighbour. Now we think our selves bound in this latter Case to be a Witness for *our Neighbour*, when we can do him Service: And are we not as much (I should say, *much more*) obliged to be Witness for God and Religion, when we can do *them* Service against Vice and Prophaneness? We don't do Justice to them, if we refuse. Shall we be faithful and just to Man, and not be so to our Maker?

Fourthly, Again, 'tis worth a serious *Arg. IV.* Thought or two, how far by concealing
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and conniving at Immorality and Prophaneness, we draw the Guilt of other Mens Sins upon us. If we do not bring these Offences into a way of Punishment, by appealing to the Magistrate, we do in Effect *approve* them, our Silence is *Consent*, and we shall be answerable for them at the Bar of God, as if we had our selves committed them. We know, that both in the Eye of Conscience and of humane Laws, he that harbours or conceals a Thief, is an Accomplice in the

Psal. 50. 18. Theft. *When thou sawest a Thief (says Asaph) thou consentedst with him, and hast been PARTAKER with Adulterers.*

What can the *Psalmist* mean by being *Partaker* with Adulterers, but concealing their Offence, and not bringing them to Punishment? And this it seems intitled them to the *Guilt* of that Lewdness which they took no Care

Psal. 101. 3. to have corrected. *I hate the Work of such as turn aside, (says David) it shall not cleave to me; as tho' he should say, If my Heart rise not against such Sins, if I should not hate them, and show my Dislike to them, they would certainly cleave to me, I should be guilty of them. To this Purpose a reverend Author admirably well expresses*

ses himself, in a little Piece, intituled,
A Letter from a Minister to his Parish-
ioners, shewing the indispensable Duty in-
cumbent on all Persons to give Informati-
ons, &c. And as I have it about me,

Printed for
 Mr. Down-
 ing, 1708.

I think I cannot better improve this
 Argument, than by reading a Passage
 or Two, that you may hear him in
 his own Words. “ It is a very great

P. 9, 10.

“ (tho’ common) Mistake, (says he)
 “ that we can be guilty of no other
 “ Crimes but what we commit:
 “ Whereas our Eyes and our Ears
 “ may be as deep almost in the Guilt
 “ as our Hands or Tongues. ---- He
 “ who is taken in Company with
 “ Murderers, Robbers, Coiners, or
 “ other Criminals, while they are
 “ acting their unlawful Designs, and
 “ does not signify his Abhorrence at
 “ that Time, nor afterwards come in
 “ and appear against them, is presu-
 “ med to be an Accomplice, whether
 “ he acted any Part or no, and fares
 “ no better than the rest of the Gang.
 “ Nor did I ever hear any Objection
 “ against the Fairness of such a Pro-
 “ ceeding. And why should we fan-
 “ cy that God will not proceed by
 “ the same Measures? That what
 “ is Reason and Justice in humane

“ Courts, should appear hard Measure
 “ at the Judgment Seat of Christ?
 “ ---- ’Twill strangely startle many a
 “ formal Hypocrite, or luke-warm
 “ Professor, who is not for being over-
 “ much righteous, nor concerning
 “ himself in the Cause of God further
 “ than needs, while he pleases him-
 “ self with the Pharisee’s Plea, *Lord,*
 “ *I thank thee, that I am not as other Men,*
 “ to find some Hundreds of Oaths and
 “ Curses, &c. set to his Account; yet
 “ thus it will be. ---- So many as he
 “ basely connived at, he will be taken
 “ to have owned and approved. ’Twill
 “ not serve the Turn then to say;
 “ *Lord, they were none of mine, I never*
 “ *had such Words in my Mouth.* For
 “ ’twill be answered, and justly too;
 “ yes, you made them your own; for
 “ what have you done to disclaim
 “ and clear your self of them? What
 “ Testimony did you give of your
 “ Dislike and Abhorrence? What
 “ Course did you take, when it was
 “ in your Power to punish and pre-
 “ vent them? ---- Men little consider,
 “ what a Crime it is, to be cold in
 “ the Cause of God, and appear un-
 “ concerned for his Honour in the
 “ World, and how deeply the jealous
 “ God

“ God will resent it. --- Now, Gentlemen, if this be true Doctrine, (as I am thoroughly perswaded it is; for certainly there are ways of being *Partakers of other Mens Sins*, or else the Apostle would not have cautioned *Timothy* against it;) it will concern us to be very careful, that we run not further into Debt with the Justice of God than we are aware of.

Eul. This Argument, I must own, has Reason on its Side. Your Notion of the Guilt, that arises from *concealing* of Offences, corresponds very well, not only with the common Law, which is now in Force amongst us, but with the Opinion of our wise Ancestors the *Saxons*, in their Institution of *Tything-men*, and what our Historians call *the Borrough-Law*. By this, every Hundred was divided into *Tythings*; each consisting of Ten Families, who were bound to the King for the good Behaviour of each other; and if any in that Division committed any Crime, the other Nine Householders were to attack and bring him to Punishment, or else to make good the Damage done by the Malefactor, and take an Oath before the Officers of the Hundred, that they were no ways acces-

Daniel's Eng.
Hist. A. D.
1037.

fary to the Fact, and that they would bring the Offender to Justice if they knew where he was, or could get him. The principal Person in each of these Tythings was called the *Headborough* or *Tything-Man*, and his Office was much of the Nature of our *Constables* now. This was a wise Institution, and kept the Country very much in awe.

Phil. It was so, and serves to illustrate my last Argument. Give me leave now to offer you one more.

Arg. V.

As by the *Abjuration Oath*, and by the very Nature of that *Allegiance* which every Subject owes to his Prince, we are bound to reveal all Treasons and traiterous Conspiracies against the Queen and Government that shall come to our Knowledge: So by the Nature of our Allegiance to Christ, (whose Subjects we are, and to whom we were sworn in our Baptism,) we are bound to reveal and bring to Punishment such Offences as are destructive to his Kingdom, and do promote the traiterous Interests of his Enemy. Now if this be not the Case, if Prophaneness and Vice are *not* destructive to the Kingdom of Christ, and if they do *not* promote the Designs and Interest of the Devil against it,

it, then indeed my Argument's wrong: But if the Case be really so, I must infer without a Compliment, that *the Concealment of Vice* is no better than *Misprision of Treason*. For if Rebellion against the Prince, if siding with his declared Enemy, or if Endeavours to subvert the Government, and cast off his Authority, be *High-Treason* with Reference to the civil State; the Practice of habitual Vice (such as prophane Swearing, Drunkenness, &c.) is the same, with Respect to GOD and the established Laws of Christianity. Every Person who is notoriously vicious and prophane is a declared Rebel against God, rejects and despises his Authority, does all that he can to infect others with the same Rebellion, and to promote the Kingdom of the Devil, designs and endeavours, to the utmost of his Power, the entire Subversion of the Government, (the whole Body of the Christian Law, by which, as the Subjects of Christ, we are to be spiritually governed;) as he hates *the Purity of that Discipline*, he would utterly abolish it if he could; and as he hates *the Lawgiver*, for the Sake of that Discipline, would certainly dethrone him if he was able Now

the prophane and wicked Person thus acting, with this Temper, with these Designs, and with this Aversion to God and Goodness, is guilty without Dispute of *High Treason* against the *Almighty Sovereign of the World*; and whoever conceals or skreens him from Punishment for his ill Practices, is by the same Rule guilty of *Misprision* of Treason, and acts contrary to the Obligation laid upon him when he was baptized, as he then bound himself to be a *faithful Subject*, and to *bear true Allegiance* to Christ. I don't know, Gentlemen, what *you* may think of these Arguments; but I assure you, they have their Weight with *me*.

Chor. Your Arguments, Sir, will have their Weight with *us* too, if I may answer as freely for *Eulabes*, as for my self: For where Men are in good earnest to discover Truth, Scripture and fair Reasoning can't be long withstood.

Eul. *Choristus* has already spoke my Sentiments: I will acknowledge what you have been pleading for to be a Christian Duty. But since we have given you so much Trouble already, let us not leave the thing imperfect. Two or Three more Objections may per-

perhaps deserve to be considered; which are rather Difficulties attending *the Practice*, than Arguments against the *Duty*. I'm afraid the *Ju-obj.XXVIII.*
stices here will not encourage it: There is too much Reason to believe they will rather *discountenance* such Informations, and conceive a Prejudice against those that bring them, and put us to all the Trouble they can in giving them.

Phil. It may be so: And you do well to expect it, that you may be the better prepared against Discouragement. Where Magistrates themselves are as guilty as the Offenders you complain of, you may be sure they won't be very fond of entertaining you upon such Occasions. But whatever Negligence they shew'd before in *enquiring after* Vice, and punishing it, they can't refuse to do their Duty upon *an Information*. But suppose they should, let *them* answer as they can for *their* Neglect, and all the Encouragement of Vice, which will be the Consequence of it: But you, when you have faithfully given your Information, have acquitted your self both to God and your Country, and done what lies in *your* Power to
sup-

suppress those scandalous Practices that dishonour God, and bring his Judgments upon the Nation. As to the *Discountenance* and *Frowns* you may expect from them on this Account; consider, what a *Coward* must that Soldier be that dares not so much as look his Enemy *in the Face*? Think of that noble Answer which the Apostles gave upon the *Discountenance* and hard Usage they met with from the Jew-

Act. 4. 19, 20.

ish Rulers; --- Whether it be right in the Sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. And again, upon the

Act. 5. 29.

same Occasion, ---- We ought to obey God rather than Men. The same Objection which you make in this Case, will equally affect most other Duties. Does not the Generality of the World agree to discourage a Spirit of Piety and Devotion, to laugh at Mortification and Self-Denial, to exclaim against the serious Practice of Religion, and to frown upon good Advice and Reproof? But would you therefore let all these alone, till they have the Honour to be voted into Fashion, and Encouragement by a Majority? Is not the Sense of that Obedience which

we

we owe to God, to prevail with us above all the idle and ill-digested Notions of Mankind? Why then shall we wait for the Encouragement of *Men*, when we have already the Ties of *God* and *Conscience* upon us in this Duty? Our Care should be chiefly to please those *in our Work*, from whom we expect *our Reward*. If therefore we expect our Reward from *Men*, if their Applause and Approbation be all we aim at, let us indeed please *them*, and we shall perish with them: But if we pretend to *the Hope of Christians*, if we design for an heavenly Country, and the Rewards of *God*, we must adhere to *his* Direction, tho' all the World should frown upon us. *No* 2 Tim. 2. 4.
Man that warreth, entangleth himself in the Affairs of this Life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a Soldier; whoever engages in the Service of God and Conscience, must make it his first and chief Endeavour to please them; avoiding all secular Considerations that are inconsistent with it.

Chor. If the Magistrate would *con-* Object. XXIX.
ceal our Names, we could be content to bear with a few Frowns or angry Words from him: But if he has a Mind to discourage us, the Offender
will

will be told who his Informer is, and we shall be sure to have an uneasy Life on't.

Phil. 'Tis very probable indeed that those ill Magistrates that punish Vice *unwillingly*, and have a Mind to break the Neck of such Prosecutions, will take this way, (since they dare not openly censure and asperse *the Law*) to discover *the Informer*, and expose him to all the Mortification and Discouragement they are able, by inflaming the Malice of the guilty Person against him. But this is not in our Power to prevent; and therefore when the Providence of God permits such a Hardship to befall us, it ought to be cheerfully suffered for the Sake of a good Conscience. For tho' it is a justifiable *Prudence* to *desire to be concealed*, 'tis unjustifiable *Cowardice* to be *afraid to be known*. I have before proved, that there is nothing we need to blush at in turning Informers against Vice; 'tis an honourable Undertaking, and the Cause of GOD; and whosoever is ashamed of it, deserves neither the Work nor the Reward.

Obj. XXX. *Eul.* But by this Discovery we shall lie under *the Hatred of all our Neighbours*.

Phil,

Phil. That we must expect; for such as hate to be reformed, can never be supposed to love their Reformers: But all that have a serious Regard to Religion and Virtue will approve of what we do, and commend our Zeal against the Corruptions of the Age. In all Matters of an *indifferent* Nature, wherein God and Conscience have left us to our Liberty, we should endeavour to please Men, the good Will of those about us being in its self a valuable Enjoyment: but where we have a *Duty* bound upon us, the Case is otherwise; there *Friendship with this World is Enmity with God*, and whosoever resolves to keep always fair with the one, must be very often upon ill Terms with the other; because the Interests of these two contending Parties can never be reconciled. We must adhere to our Duty, let the World resent it as it will; for *if I yet pleased Men*, (says St. Paul) *I should not be the Servant of Christ*. It's true, we ought to give no reasonable Occasions of Distast, by Pride and Haughtiness, by a *Pharisaical* Value of our selves, and Contempt of others, by taking Advantage of the Laws to execute our own Revenge, by rash Heat

Rom. 15. 2.

1 Cor. 10. 33.

Jam. 4. 4.

1 John 2. 15.

Gal. 1. 10.

Heat and Passion, or by insulting over Offenders in their Punishment: For if we do *thus*, and Hatred follow, 'tis not our *Duty*, but our *Indiscretion* draws it on. But if with a Conduct, full of Meekness, Humility, and religious Prudence, we can't *prevent* their Hatred, we must learn to *bear* it; comforting our selves with this, that it renders us the more conformable to the blessed JESUS, whom the World hated, because *he testified, that the Works thereof were evil; if the World*

John 7. 7.

John 15. 18.

hate you (says he) *ye know that it hated ME before it hated YOU.* If this be not enough to *encourage*, there is yet another Consideration that should *me-thinks engage* us; and that is, that cheerfully to embrace the Hatred of ill Men, for the Sake of our Duty to him, is one of those Terms upon which we are to hope for everlasting Glory.

Matt. 10. 22.

Ye shall be hated of all Men (says he) *for my Name's Sake; but he that endureth to the End shall be saved.* Where-

Rev. 21. 8.

as on the other Hand, the *FEARFUL* and *Unbelievers* shall have no better Fate than the *Abominable*, and the *Whoremongers*, and must expect their Portion in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone.

Chor.

Chor. Their Hatred, as it implies *Obj.* XXXI. their *ill Opinion* only, is not the worst of the Case: But the Consequence of that, their *malicious Practices* against us, deserves to be considered. Our very *Lives* may be in Danger, or at least our *Livelihood*. For my Part, I am a Tradesman, and I must expect to *lose all my Custom*; and it may be, to be harassed besides, with spiteful Prosecutions; for Malice never wants an Advantage from the Law. Now this would be the way to ruin me.

Phil. I did imagine this lay at the Bottom of all your Objections; but I think there is little in it; because there *is not* really that Danger with which we are so apt to fright our selves. Did you ever *hear of* any Tradesman, that so entirely lost his Custom, as to be broke and ruined, for appearing in the Cause of Reformation of Manners? I won't say that no Body has *suffered* in their Trade or their Estate on this Account: But I will, that the Providence of God has generally (if not always) so supported them when they have, by raising up Friends to them, or some other way making up their Loss by his peculiar Blessing (even as to their Concerns in this World,)

World,) that they have had no Reason to complain. And as to the Hazard of *our Lives*, it must be owned, that in the Compass of Seventeen or Eighteen Years, two Murders have been committed upon the Quarrel of Reformation of Manners. The First was upon a Constable, endeavouring to suppress Disorders in *May-Fair*; the last upon Mr. *Dent*, assisting another Constable to seize lewd Women, and bring them before a Justice of Peace: But neither of these suffered properly for *informing*; or suppose they had, shall not we be a Pack of scandalous Cowards, to be frightened with the Danger of what has happened so very seldom in so large a Compass of Time? All you can conclude is, that there is indeed a *Possibility* of your being murdered, or ruined, and undone, for shewing your self against Immorality and Vice; and so there is of being drowned at any time when you cross the Water, or breaking your Neck, whenever you ride out: But a Man would be very superstitious and humourfome that should resolve never to venture himself upon the Water, and never to mount on Horseback, for Fear of such Accidents, which

which yet are much more frequent than the other. Why shall we not trust our selves with him that made us? We are under the constant Care of that Providence, which stills the *Psal 65. 7.* Noise of the Waves, and the Tumult of the People. Surely (says Asaph) the *Psal 76. 10.* Wrath of Man shall praise Thee, and the Remainder of Wrath shalt Thou restrain. They are under the Limitations set them by the Will of God, who will permit them to exercise their Spleen *Rom. 8. 28.* no farther than may serve his Glory and our Good; and when those Ends are served, (which we have all the Reason in the World to submit to,) he will effectually restrain them, and whatsoever Mischief they may wish, they shall be able to do none.

Chor. But if there really be a Danger, you'll allow it, I hope, to be in some Measure an Excuse for keeping in our Zeal.

Phil. It would be an Argument indeed for all the prudent Caution that is consistent with Zeal; but no Excuse for neglecting or declining a Duty. At our eternal Peril it will be, if we suffer Reasons of Trade or Interest to jostle aside our Christianity. If I have proved (as you acknowledge I have)

that the giving of Informations for the Suppressing Vice and Prophaneness is a *Christian Duty*, all worldly Considerations must give way to it. GOD is to be obeyed, and served, and glorified by us in the *first Place*; the Interests of this Life are to follow at

Luke 14. 26,
27.

their proper Distance. *If any Man*, says our Saviour, *come to me, and hate not* (i. e. comparatively, so as to prefer his Duty to me before) *his Father and Mother, Wife and Children, &c.* (all the Objects of his Care and Affection in this World,) *yea, and his own LIFE also, he cannot be my Disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after me;*

Ver. 33.

---- *Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not ALL that HE HATH* (rather than his Adherence to me and to my Interest,) *cannot be my Disciple.* I hope this will satisfy you, for no Words can express it more fully, that Life, and Livelihood, and the Concerns of our Families, are to be no Pretence for omitting any thing that God and our Religion require of us. *To him that knoweth to do Good, and doth it not,* (whatever he may object from Danger or worldly Interest) *to him it is SIN.*

Jam. 4. 17.

Eul. But give me Leave; the Infirmities of humane Nature are to be consulted a little. Is it not hard to bind us over to these Mortifications, without considering whether we have Strength to bear them?

Phil. All *Moral* Infirmities of our Nature (where they are allowed) are *Sins*, and therefore, with your good Leave, are not to be *consulted* and *indulged*, but carefully *striven against* and *overcome*. In order to this, 'tis our Part to *resolve* and *endeavour* faithfully to pursue our Duty, whatever be the Consequence; Strength to *perform* this is the Gift of GOD, and he will not be wanting. For this Reason he is no hard Master in what he has required of us. And I think it will further appear to us that he is not, if we consider how very *reasonable* it is, upon Prospects of our truest *Interest*, and Principles of the truest *Wisdom*, to keep close to our Duty whatever Hazards may attend it.

Chor. Pray proceed then; for we have need of every thing that may convince us in so tender a Point.

Phil. You are to consider *First*, that *Ag. 1.* the *most lasting* Treasure is what a wise Man would desire most. Now

'tis plain, that the Importance or Advantage of all our worldly Interests reaches no farther than this *short uncertain Life*; some time or other you must die, and then *whose will those things be which you have provided?* Your Childrens? you love them at a strange imprudent Rate, if you're willing to be undone for ever for their Sakes. Besides, their Life is as uncertain as your's; and perhaps none of them may have many Months to live after you: Or, being so solicitous to provide for them, as to value that before the Glory of God and a good Conscience, perhaps they may in Judgment be taken away before you. However, 'tis certain, *you* will be no longer capable of any worldly Enjoyments in the Grave: But on the other Hand, if you shall be able to answer it to God, that you have faithfully, upon all Occasions, preferred his Glory and Service before any secular Interest of your own, that you have cheerfully laid the Wealth and Friendship of this World at Stake, and resolutely embraced all Hazards for the Promoting Piety and Virtue, and suppressing that which is most hateful to him, Vice and Prophaneness, you

you will find the Conscience of this to yeild you Comfort and Satisfaction upon a Death-Bed, when Bonds, and Writings, and Bags of Money, will rather fill you with Trouble, at the Thoughts of leaving them, than any Pleasure in possessing them. This will go along with you into another State, and make a part of that Happiness there that shall for ever crown you. You will then find, that by sacrificing the Expectations of this World, to the Service of God and Virtue, you have chosen *that better Part which shall not be taken from you, and laid up Treasure in Heaven*, which no Man's Villany or Malice can impair, no Rust deface, no Death deprive you of.

Matt. 5. 10.

11, 12.

1 Pet. 4. 13.

John 12. 25.

2 Tim. 2. 12.

Rom. 8. 17

And as to the Difficulty of parting with *present* Enjoyments for those at *Distance* and *unseen*; let me ask you, is it not suitable, to the Wisdom of all Mankind, to lay out a present Stock for future Increase? The Husbandman plows, and throws his Seed into the Ground, with Expence of Time, and Pains, and Money, for a Crop which he must wait for several Months. The Purchaser will give a large Annuity to be enjoyed at pre-

Arg. II.

sent for the Reversion of an Estate. The Merchant ventures his Effects abroad, thro' the Hazard of Winds, and Waves, and Rocks, and Pirates, to every Part of the World, in hopes of great Advantage in the Return. And thus, in the Gospel, *the Kingdom of Heaven* is likened to a Merchant, who when he had found one Pearl of great Value, *went and sold ALL THAT HE HAD, and bought it.* Pray tell me then, is it not the wisest Bargain you can make, to give this World for the next; the Trifles you possess, or hope for here, for *that exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory* to be enjoyed hereafter?

Matt. 13. 45,
46.

Arg. III.

Matt. 6. 33.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

As to the Care of your *Family*, remember God is able abundantly to provide for *you* and *them*, when the Malice of Men has done its worst against you. Nor is he *able* only, but he has *positively promised* so to provide for you, if you make it your first Care to serve and glorifie *him*. Seek first (or chiefly) *the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these things* (the Necessaries of Life) *shall be added unto you*; says our Saviour. For *Godliness has a Promise of the Life that now is* (a suitable and fit Provision by the Providence

vidence of God for us in *this* World) as well as *that which is to come*. Let our present Sufferings be what they will, from the Malice and Violence of such as hate to be reformed; tho' our Trade should really sink, and our Estates be visibly impaired, thro' their Resentment of our Endeavours to reform them: Yet this being the Work of God, attempted from a pious Zeal for his Glory, and the promoting Virtue and Religion; we may depend upon it, he will reward our Concern for *him*, by a due Care for *us*, and *ours*. He will find Means to support us with all things needful, for *there is* Psal. 34. 9, 10. *no want to them that fear him. The young Lions do lack and suffer Hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* And whenever we die, the World will be very much mistaken if they think we die poor; for leaving our Family *in his Hands*, with so just a Title to his Protection, can any Man say they are not happy in a *powerful and careful Guardian*? Can any Man say, we do not leave them *a very good Estate*? The Government usually provides, you see, for such as have been maimed or disabled in its Service; and Pensions are often settled

upon the Widows and Children of such as died bravely in the Wars, or signalized their Courage (tho' they come off with Life) by many honourable Wounds in fighting for their Prince and Country. And will not GOD, do you think, provide for that Man or his Family, that has behaved himself as a brave Christian ought to do against Vice and Profaneness, and has suffered in that glorious Quarrel, on the Side of God and Virtue? To imagine otherwise, would be an absurd Reflexion upon the Sovereign of the World, as if infinite Power were less able, and infinite Goodness less willing, to take Care of those that suffer for him, than humane Governments, with all their Poverty and Imperfection, are. Now if you have the Promise of God to provide for you and your Children, especially when you suffer in his Cause, (as promoting Virtue and Religion is) what would you have more? Is it not highly reasonable that you should trust him? And considering also, that *his* Provision is always better than *our own*, is it not even a Point of *Wisdom*, to venture all our present Possessions in his Service, for
so

so sure and so immense a Fund as his eternal Providence?

But suppose you still to depend up- *Arg. IV.*
on your Trade, 'tis worth your while

to consider, from whence it is that you expect a Blessing upon *that*. Whoever may plant, and whoever waters, 'tis yet a higher Hand that gives the Increase. Now as all your Success in Trade, and Life its self, as well as the Enjoyments of it, depend upon the Blessing of God; is it Prudence to

Prov. 10. 22.

Deut. 30. 20.

provoke him by preferring any of these things before him? Does he not usually *blast* our Comforts when we inordinately set our Hearts upon them, to the Neglect of his Service and Glory? Very often, in such a Case, he takes the Enjoyment from us, or baffles the worldly and ambitious Project, sends a secret Worm into our Estates, and disappoints our greedy Appetite of Gain, to teach us that he will bear no Rival in our Hearts. Tho' we should still seem to prosper in the World, he has threatned, *If ye*

Mal. 2. 2.

will not bear, and if ye will not lay it to Heart, to give Glory to my Name, I will even send a Curse upon you, and I will CURSE your BLESSINGS. The Wrath of God has ways enough in Store

*Gen. 22. 16,
17, 18.*

Store to four our very Enjoyments into Curses, when they draw us off from our Duty to him and our Zeal for him. On the other Hand, when he finds us ready in the Disposition of our Minds to part with all for his Glory and Interest, he generally rewards it with a double Blessing, even in this present World. So *Abraham*, when he was about to offer up his Son (the only Comfort of his Age, the only Hopes of his Family,) at God's Command, received not only a Grant of *Isaac's* Life, but an additional and solemn Promise, that *BECAUSE* he had done that Thing, and not withheld his Son, his only Son, in Blessing God would bless him, and multiply his Seed as the Stars of Heaven; that his Seed should possess the Gates of his Enemies, and in it all Nations should be blessed. If then it is the Blessing of God, upon which you must entirely depend for all the Prosperity of your Fortunes, and all the Advantages of Life; what think you? Will not Prudence determine it your truest Interest, to be resolute and zealous in promoting his Glory, that you may secure his Favour?

Lastly,

Lastly, 'Twere enough to evince the *Arg. V.*
Reasonableness of what I am contend-
ing for, that *Honour* and *Gratitude* ob-
lige us to *venture* all for his Service
from whom we *receive* all. Now as
all our Enjoyments, and Life its self,
are absolutely the Gift of God, and
given us for this very End too, that
we should glorifie him with them, 'tis *1 Cor. 10.31.*
unjust in the first Place, *ungrateful* in
the next, and on both Accounts *un-*
reasonable to decline the parting with
any of them, when the Service and
Glory of God requires it; and still
more so, that we should scruple so
much as to *hazard* these things for his
Sake. If there were a *Certainty* of lo-
sing them for him, Reason would
bind us, in Point of Gratitude and Ho-
nour, to submit: But when there is
only a bare *Possibility* and a *Venture*
in the Case, what can we say to ju-
stifie a Refusal?

Eul. Notwithstanding all your Ar-
guments (which yet I acknowledge
to be very good,) it will cost us some
Struggle to conquer Nature and Self-
love, from which we all derive an
Aversion to Suffering, especially when
we think 'tis in our Power to avoid
it.

Phil.

Phil. It may be so : But *Nature* and *Self-love* take too much upon them, when they step forward before the *Love of God*. All Virtue and Religion consists in the opposing our natural Desires and Aversions when they become irregular, and therefore the same Excuse will lie against every other Christian Duty, if it was to be allowed in this ; for sinful and corrupted Nature is extremely backward to them all. We must expect to

[*Tim.* 6. 12.] *FIGHT the good Fight of Faith*, if ever we hope to obtain the Crown that belongs to it, and to *lay hold on eternal Life* ; for where would be the Glory of the Conquest, if there were no Struggle, no Difficulties to be gone through ? We must call in the Assistance of God's Grace, by frequent and fervent Prayer ; we must form ourselves every Day to fresh Resolutions ; we must endeavour to read such Books, and converse with such Persons, as may contribute to encourage us in this Warfare, and work our Affections up as much as possible, by meditating often upon the Vanity of this World, and the only solid and substantial Happiness of the next. And by such Discipline as this, I question not but

Na-

Nature and Self-Love, and that Aversion to Suffering, which you complain of, may be conquered.

Chor. But may not true Zeal for God and Religion be provided for by *reproving*, as well as informing, and I'm sure that's the safer way?

Phil. I told you before, and gave my Reasons for it, that Reproof is not sufficient to acquit you of that Christian Zeal you ought to shew against Impiety and Vice: And I will now add, that you are mistaken, if you think it to be much a *safer* way than informing. Why was it that the Jews sought to kill our Saviour, but because he had boldly and freely *told them the Truth*, and reprov'd them? *John. 8. 37.*
 What was it that *John the Baptist* was ^{40.} imprisoned for, but because he had *re-* ^{Matt. 14. 3.}
prov'd Herod for his Incest and Adultery? I know by Experience, in some Places, where Persons, instead of being informed against and punished, have only had Letters of Reproof (and those very mild and prudent ones) sent to them, the Offender has expressed as much Resentment, Spleen, and Rage at this Reproof, as he ever did or could do when he was at other times brought to Punishment; and this, not
 in

in one or two Instances, of Men particularly ill-natured, but *generally*. In short, their Anger and Hatred is levelled at any Person, or any thing that would make them wiser and better, let the Method taken with them be what it will.

Eul. Indeed, *Choristus*, I am of the same Mind; I think your last Proposal has very little in it; and if we must run upon the Teeth of Danger, pray let it be for doing something to the Purpose. And I confess, I am entirely of Opinion now, that *Informing* is likely to be of much more effectual Service to Religion, than *reproving* without that can ever be. But bear with me, good *Philaretus*, in one

Obj. XXXII. Word more. Suppose we should comply with you, we are not assured that any Body else will engage in this Work beside our selves: And what Good can *Two* or *Three* stragling Zealots in a County do? Without further Assistance, they will only expose themselves, by an Attempt above their Strength, to the Rage and Ridicule of ill Men, without any reasonable Hopes of doing the Service they aim at.

Phil.

Phil. In Answer to this, you must pardon me, if I observe an ill Appearance in the Objection, as if we were rather to trust to *Numbers*, than to the *Blessing of God* for our Success. But *there is no Restraint to the Lord*, to effect his Work by *Many* or by *Few*. 'Tis nothing with Thee, says pious *Asa* in his Prayer, to help with *Many*, or with those that have no Power; for we rest on THEE, and in THY NAME we go against this Multitude. So again, you find that when *Gideon* had got together an Army of Thirty Two Thousand Men against the *Midianites*, the Lord, by a particular Order, reduced them to Three Hundred, lest *Israel* (said he) vaunt themselves against me, saying, my own Hand hath saved me. I don't intend to deny by this, that *Numbers* are an Encouragement to a good Design; but our Success not depending upon that, 'tis want of Judgment, as well as want of Courage, to despair, and throw down our Arms, because we have but at few Confederates. If none but we that are here should make the Attempt, it could not indeed be so extensive through the County, as it were to be wished: But it might do Service in the Neighbourhood however;

1 Sam. 14. 6.

2 Chron. 14.

11.

Judg. 7. 2, - 8.

ever; and two or three Persons alone; that would faithfully and vigorously pursue the Work, either here or any where else, might, by the Blessing of God, be capable of doing a great deal of Good, and strike a mighty Terror into Vice and Prophaneness; especially, if any one Magistrate will be faithful in concealing our Names. For in this Case, as Fear is naturally apt to multiply the Instruments of Terror, and to fancy *Hundreds*, where perhaps there are not *Tens* to engage with, they will imagine us to be a great and formidable Body, not knowing how many, or how few we are, but only in general, they find the Cause of Vice betrayed, and the Magistrate has frequent Notice given him of their Excesses. And suppose we should be discovered, they will still suspect there are more concerned in the thing than they have yet been able to find out; which will make them fearful of every Body, or at least, of all sober and virtuous Persons, whom 'tis more than possible they will charge at a Venture, with being Informers as well as we; and these cautious Persons, finding themselves reproached (tho' without Occasion for it) under the
same

same Suspicion with us, will perhaps consider on't, and join us at last, that they may not suffer *for doing nothing*. But however, let us (who are not to answer for other Peoples Sloth and Backwardness, but for our own,) shake off all Excuses; and if we can't do so much Service as we would, let us do all the Service that we can; and this, I must tell you, Gentlemen, is all that God expects from us. *Success* is not in our own Power, *Endeavours* are; and therefore 'tis not the Want of *that* we shall answer for, but the Neglect of *these*. I will only add, that whensoever any Undertakings of this kind are set on Foot, some Body must begin, and those that do, will in all Probability be few enough at first; but they may afterwards encrease, beyond even the *Hopes* of the first Adventures. For an Instance of this I need not to go far: The very Beginning of all our Societies for Reformation of Manners, which have made so great a Figure in *England* several Years, have multiplied in *London* to a very great Degree, have diffused themselves into many Parts of the Nation, and spread not only the Fame, but the Imitation of these Endeavours into Foreign Countries,

Account of the Societies for Reform. of Manners, (1 Edit.) p. 5.

Countries, and made such a noble Stand against Impiety and Vice, was at first an Attempt of only Five or Six private Gentlemen, who had as little Reason to hope, with so small a Number, to reform that one City of *London*, as we Three can have to reform our whole County. But they who laid the Foundations of their Attempt in Faith, and Zeal, and Courage, were quickly blessed, by Providence, with the Accession of many more, who *came in to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty*. And thus *E-*

1 King. 18. 44,
45.

lijah's Cloud, no broader at first than the Palm of a Man's Hand, spread so far in a very little time, that the whole Heavens were black, and an unexpected Storm broke down from very contemptible Beginnings.

Eul. Well, what do you say, *Choristus*, are you willing to engage in this Design? For my Part, I am, and, by the Grace of God, will do the best Service I am able.

Chor. And so shall I: But I hope *Philaretus* will give us *his* Assistance too.

Phil. Yes sure; for 'twould be very impertinent, as well as very dishonourable, after all the Pains I have
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taken to perswade you to it, if I myself should decline the Service.

Chor. You have taken true Pains indeed to convince us; and I pray God to reward you.

Phil. I thank you, Sir, and in Return, I heartily bless God, *First*, for convincing *me* of this great Duty, then for inclining and moving me to use my Endeavours in convincing *you*; and *Lastly*, for the happy *Success* of those Endeavours, and that you *are* at length brought to a due Sense in this Matter. I hope 'tis a good Omen of the Success with which the Providence of God may bless us in the *Practice* of this Duty, as he has already done in the *Conviction* of it.

Eul. I wish it may, and I believe it is: But should we not consult a little further upon the *Management* of this Business? That we may act by *Concert* and by *Rule*, and that a well intended Zeal may not be sullied by Imprudences.

Phil. You're in the Right. But I perceive we are call'd away to Supper; Gentlemen, you will do me the Favour of your Company: And afterwards we will consider of the Point you propose.

Accordingly Supper being ended, and the Room left clear to themselves, *Choristus* put him in Mind of his Promise, which *Philaretus* as readily set himself to perform.

To manage that Affair (said he) to the best Advantage, it will be requisite for us to form our selves into a *Society*, to meet together privately every Week under certain stated Rules, to encourage one another in the Service we are engaged in, to consult upon Difficulties that may accidentally arise, to contrive and dispose all things relating to the more effectual Execution of our Purpose, and to contribute to a common Fund to bear the necessary Charges of our Undertaking.

Chor. Charges! I hope there won't be much of that.

Eul. If there be, *Choristus*, you're able enough to bear your Share.

Phil. I wish there might be none: But 'tis fit we should be prepared however. And is it possible we should think much to lay out something of our Estate for the Service and Glory of God, when we are in Truth but *Stewards under him* of all that we enjoy? He expects, that out of that Fortune he has given us, (whether it be

be more or less) we should proportionably contribute to any thing that may promote his Honour, the Interest of Piety and Virtue, and the Relief of the Poor; the rest he leaves us for the Use of our selves and our Families. Now if we decline to lay out any due Proportion for those first Uses, and are so greedy for the latter as to swallow up all in *them*, we rob God and the Poor, and build up our Houses by Sacrilege and Iniquity.

Chor. Well, Sir, I am satisfied; I shall not refuse to contribute what I can, either in Pains or Money, to the Work, as Occasion shall require: But still I think we are *too Few* for a Society.

Phil. It must be our Care to enquire and find out such Persons in the Neighbourhood as are well disposed to Religion, and of a sober and unblemished Character. These we must visit, and get to some Degree of Freedom with them first, endeavouring by occasional Discourses to excite their Zeal for God, and strengthen their Faith and Courage against the Opposition which ill Men will always make, and the Discouragement they will always give to the Profession and

Practice of Virtue. When we perceive they have made some Improvement in those Graces, we must be frequently making Observations upon the scandalous Prevalence of Vice and Immorality, and sift, by degrees, what Opinion they have in general of the Execution of the Laws in that Case, and be giving them, as we find they will bear it, Arguments to prove the Necessity and Usefulness of such Attempts for Reformation. After this, when we see our proper time, we may break the Proposal to them of giving Informations, and answer all the Objections they may make against it, chiefly insisting upon Scripture and Reason to persuade them; this done, we may the more easily prevail with them to join in a Society for this Purpose. But all these things are (with some Tempers at least) to be done gradually, lest the sudden and blunt proposing of a Work, which is sure to have such powerful Enemies as the Devil, and our own corrupt Natures, and worldly Interests against it, should too much surprize them.

Enl. You must resolve another material Question by the way. What Rank of Men will be most proper for

for us to apply to upon this Score? If *Gentlemen*, I'm afraid our Neighbourhood will yeild but Few of *them* that will embarque in such an Undertaking. Your *Tradesmen*, I doubt, (with *Choristus's* good Leave) are for the most Part too much taken up with the Interests and Busineses of this World to hearken to us.

Phil. Perhaps we may succeed with some of *all* Ranks; however, *all* are to be tried, where we find a Sense of Religion and Virtue that may encourage us to attempt them. But I observe you have left out *one*, which may be the likeliest of any to join with us, those of *ordinary* and *meaner* Rank.

Eul. But would you have *them* in the same Society with *us*?

Phil. Why not? We are all baptized into the Service of the same Master, engaged in the same Work, and hope for the same Reward, for Heaven will make no Distinctions in Point of Quality. And for my Part, I had rather converse with a truly religious poor Man, in whom I find a noble and generous Zeal for God and Virtue, than with a prophane atheistical Gentleman.

Eul. But won't the Familiarity consequent upon this give too great an *Assurance* to that sort of People, and make them lose their good Manners in their Zeal?

Phil. Humility and Grace are the surest Foundation for good Manners; and suppose a poor Man to be first truly religious, (which is a Qualification I laid down as necessary before,) and you need not question he will keep his Distance. And suppose the same Qualification in *us*, it will teach us not to despise his Piety and Virtue, because the Providence of God has put it in a meaner Dress than our's. Come, Sir, we are to look upon such as Fellow-Heirs with us in our eternal Hopes; and why then shall we scruple to keep them Company on Earth, whom we hope to embrace and to converse with in Heaven? Our Lord has left such Marks of his Respect and Affection to the Poor, that we cannot despise *them* without despising *him*.

Chor. Granting all this, Sir, we have it still to debate, what *Methods* we must keep to, to make our Society regular and useful: For a great deal depends upon that.

Phil.

Phil. This may be debated more at large hereafter; yet for your present Satisfaction, I will give you my Thoughts as to the Method in general, which I shall borrow from the Practice of other Societies, and from the Rules laid down in a Book called, *A Help to a National Reformation.*

Page 105, &c.
5th Edit.
1706.

In the first Place, it will be necessary for us to subscribe a Paper, obliging our selves to the following Articles, that every Member of the Society have a Copy of this Paper, by him; or however, that it be publicly read once a Month before us. The Articles to be such as these:

I. That we meet Weekly, either at one another's Houses in our Turns, or at some particular constant Place of Meeting, (under the Forfeiture of any Sum to be agreed upon, for every Default without just Cause,) to consult from Time to Time, how we may be most serviceable in promoting the Execution of the Laws against Immorality and Prophaneness.

II. That at these Meetings we forbear all Discourse of public News or private Affairs, and all unnecessary Disputes of Controversie in Religion;
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applying our selves wholly to the proper Business and Design of the Society; and for Order-Sake, chuse a *Chairman* to preside, to put to the Question any Proposal that shall be made; as also a *Secretary*, to enter in a Book kept for that Purpose, all Resolutions, Rules, and Orders, that shall be agreed upon, and all our Proceedings at these Meetings.

III. That when any thing is proposed, it shall be debated with Calmness and Temper, Reasons offered, and Objections answered; when these things are done, it shall be put to the Vote by the Chairman, and the Majority of Voices shall determine; every Member of the Society shall be bound by such a Determination, till altered by a Majority at another Meeting, except it be contrary to the Word of God, to the Laws, or to any one's Conscience; if the Voices be equal, the Chairman may have the deciding Vote, or it may be proposed again at another Meeting.

IV. That it be Part of the Office of the Chairman for the Time being, to take Notice of the Breach of any of our Orders; to warn absenting Members of the Obligation they laid upon
upon

upon themselves to meet with us, and the Importance of the Business they are engaged in; to enquire of every Member, how he has discharged the Business that was allotted to him at the last Meeting, and what Difficulties he has met with, in order to find out proper Remedies; and to read over the Minutes of what has been resolved upon at the End of every Meeting.

V. That we make it our Business, as Occasion serves, to encourage and assist Officers in the Discharge of their Duty, in discovering disorderly Houses, or in taking up Offenders, and carrying them before the Magistrates; and also to give Informations our selves as we have Opportunity.

VI. That in all Cases of Difficulty that may occur, we consult the Learned in the Law, (which, by the by, *Choristus*, is part of the necessary Charges in this Undertaking, which I hinted at before in general;) that we may be sure to go no further than the Law will warrant us.

VII. That we endeavour, (so far as Decency and good Manners will allow,) in all Companies where we find these Proceedings reflected on,
to

to justifie and defend the Execution of the Laws against Vice, and those that do their Duty towards it; this must be done with Calmness and Reason, but yet with Steadiness and Resolution too. And that we use all proper Means to prevail with Persons of all Ranks to concur with us in this good Work of Reformation, especially Magistrates, Constables, and Church-Wardens, who are under the special Obligation of *Oaths* to act in it.

VIII. That we endeavour also to encrease *our Society* with Men of Virtue and Prudence; but that no Person be admitted, except by Consent of the Majority of our Body, and after a careful Enquiry, by some Person or Persons, deputed for that Purpose, concerning his Life and Conversation.

IX. That no Person be allowed to be present in our Society who is not a Member; and that all our Debates and Resolutions be kept secret.

X. That we endeavour all we can, to persuade our religious Acquaintance in other Parts of the Country, to engage in the like Work, and set up the like Societies there; that the Design may spread as far as possible.

XI. That

XI. That we look upon our selves as under a peculiar Obligation to pray (in our private Devotions) for the Reformation of the Kingdom in general, for the Direction and Blessing of God upon our Undertaking in particular, and for the Propagation and Success of the like Societies elsewhere.

Chor. You have laid down very good Rules for a Society; but I conceive there may be some further Directions in Point of Prudence to be observed, as to *the giving Informations*; pray let us have your Advice in that. And particularly I would ask you, whether we must inform of *every* Offender, and of *every* Offence, or in what Cases we may at any time omit.

Phil. I don't say that every Offender is to be punished, or every Instance of his Crime to be laid hold on, at least, not in all Cases: But Informations are to be so frequently given in, and so impartially, as may be sufficient to answer the End of the Law, to break the Power and Prevalence of Vice, to secure the Honour of Religion and Virtue, and to effect, if possible, the Reformation of ill Men. You can't expect I should be very par-

particular in a Direction of this kind, because of the great Variety of Cases that may happen. Much must be left to a Man's own Discretion, provided that he deal *ingenuously* with his Conscience, and govern himself by an equal Mixture of Zeal for God, and Charity to his Neighbour. Some special Occurrences may be also considered and debated in our Society, as Occasion requires, and the Measures of our Proceeding in them may be directed there, by a general Consultation. But not to put you wholly off with this, I will give you my Opinion in some Cases now, since you desire it.

Dr. Stan-
hope's Serm.
of the Duty of
Rebuking, p. 2.

I. *Blasphemy* is not to be concealed upon any Account; because it subverts the Fundamentals of Religion. Private Rebuke is not enough in this Case, whatever it may be in some Circumstances as to other Offences.

II. Where we are able to form a Conviction of the horrid Sin of *Sodomy* or *Bestiality*, we should by no Means suffer it to escape in any Instance whatsoever: Because this Sin draws down the Judgments of God upon the Na-

Nation, where 'tis suffered, in a very particular Manner.

III. *Lewd-Houses* are to be discovered and suppressed, without any the least Connivance ; as they are scandalous *Nurseries* of Vice, set up on Purpose to debauch. These are Root and Branch to be destroyed, being utterly unworthy of any Favour or Exception.

IV. As to *Persons* guilty of *Lewdness*, either there or any where else, their Crime is generally committed with so much Secrecy, that it will be but seldom we can discover it upon such certain Grounds as to enable us to proceed against the Offenders in the Course of Law ; and yet I'm afraid 'tis a very common one, and I'm sure as necessary to be suppressed as any other. If the Conviction may be ever spared, 'tis where upon Enquiry and Examination we find it the first Fault of unguarded Youth, thro' Surprise and strong Temptation, or some other Circumstances and Considerations which may reasonably plead (in point of Prudence and Charity) for Concealment. The Reason for this Exception is, that the Sense of Modesty and Honour is not yet intirely lost in such
Per-

Persons ; but a sharp Reproof and serious Expostulations may perhaps recover it, while open Shame would possibly make them desperate. But this is not the Case of common Prostitutes, or of those lewd Debauchees that frequent and maintain them ; let *them* by all Means suffer the Rigour of the Law ; and the *others* too, if they repeat their Offence.

Dr. Stan-
hope's Serm.
Ec. p. 3.

V. *All* Offences, when they become *notorious* and *public*, are ripened to *Habits* of Vice, and shamelessly persisted in against Persuasion and friendly Expostulation, ought to be informed against and punished ; because of the *Scandal* that arises from them, and the Encouragement it would give to Wickedness, if such Examples of Presumption should have no Mark of public Infamy and Abhorrence set upon them.

Dr. Stan-
hope, p. 4.

VI. But Sins that are so secretly committed, as *not to be scandalous*, are first to be *reproved* : If that, do not work upon the Offender, he may be informed against. The Reason is, that here, 'tis *his Amendment* (not any public Scandal or Mischief,) that falls properly under our Consideration ; and therefore such Methods are to be
used

used as may contribute best to that Amendment. Take Notice, by the by, I do not amongst these secret Sins include the Case of *Lewdness*, but that of Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness, &c. when they are so privately committed as not to be observed by others: “ For the Case is greatly altered when these Offences become Matter of general Observation, and the Care of preserving others from Infection becomes Part of our Concern. So that the Rule may be reduced to this; if a Person swear, or curse, or be overtaken in Drink, in my Company alone, without others seeing or hearing him, and is not generally guilty of such things, I would only reprove him at some proper Season for it. If Reproof will not prevail for Reformation, I think my self bound (and so I should tell him) to take other Methods, or to make it still more general.

Dr. Stan-
hope's *Serm.*
Ec. p. 5.

VII. I would not inform, wherever I may reasonably hope, from my Friendship or Freedom with the Offender, to reclaim him by private Reproof; or if I can do it by employing any other good Hand, (who is better acquainted with him, and fitter

for the Purpose than I am,) to tell him of his Fault.

Now to reduce these Three last Rules to Practice, in the Case of Drunkenness, and prophane Swearing and Cursing. If a Person, who is un-awares, and against the general Character of his Life, overtaken in Excess of Drink, or by Surprise or Passion (not from customary or habitual Wickedness) chance to swear or curse; he may be supposed to have so much Force of Conscience remaining in him, that a prudent and friendly Reproof given him at a proper Season, when his Head is cool again, and his Passion laid, may have a very good Effect, and put him more upon his Guard for the Future: This way therefore should be taken to reform him. Yet if this Person's Offence be public, if he swear, or curse, or be seen drunk in the midst of Company, or in the open Streets, so that many other Persons could not but observe him, *his Example* is more fatal than that of even a *common* Swearer and Debauchee; and as his *Crime* was public, the *Reflexion upon it* ought to be so too, that such as will be ready to *take Example* by the one, may also *take Warning* by the other.

But

But as to notorious and common Offenders, all Parties are agreed, I think, that they deserve no Favour; because, by a long Habit of Excess or Prophaneness, they have so hardened themselves, that Reproof will keep no Bridle upon them; they generally *boast* of their Intemperance, and *glory in their Shame*, and *pride themselves* in full-mouth'd Oaths and Curses, which is an Impudence that can never be too severely curbed.

These Rules will also hold in some Measure in the Cases of *Prophanation of the Lord's-Day* by exercising Trades, worldly Business or Diversions, and *absenting from the public Offices of Religion*. I mean, that the Offender should be first reprov'd (if it can conveniently be done) and made sensible of his Fault, and told what he is to expect if he continue obstinate. Accordingly, if afterwards he be found guilty, let him suffer the Punishment of the Law till he reforms, and that for every Instance we discover: For these Offences persisted in do argue a settled Contempt of Religion, and are committed in cool Blood, which neither Drink, nor Lust, nor Passion, have inflamed.

Eul. But every Body that may hear or see these Offences hath not *Discretion* and *Character* enough, or perhaps not *Freedom* or *Courage* enough to reprove as they ought to do, in Cases where you allow that charitable Method to be first used: For there must be a *wise Reprover* as well as an *obedient Ear* to effect the Purposes of Reproof. Now what must such do?

Phil. I grant, that every Body has not the Talent of reproving, (for 'tis a nice Point to manage wisely;) wherein the Time and Place, the Temper of the Offender, the Quality of his Offence, the Rank, Character, and Familiarity of the Reprover, as well as the Art with which he introduces, and the Terms in which he dresses up his Reproof, are all to be considered. But on the other Hand, you must grant me, that if he have not the Talent of Reproving, he may get some Body else to undertake it that has; or if he can't do that, he has still the Talent of *informing*, if he please to make Use of it; and I don't know why he should not, if either the Offender will not be better by Reproof, or if it cannot (as in the Case which you propose) conveniently be given.

Eul.

Eul. What must *Women* do in this Matter? Will it become *them* either to reprove or inform?

Phil. Yes surely, both the one and the other: I see nothing that can be suggested to the contrary. You will allow that Sex to be *Christians* as well as ours; and if so, they are equally bound to a Zeal for the Honour of God and Religion, and to promote, to their utmost, the spiritual Good of their Fellow-Christians, as we are; for the Precepts of the Gospel are general, and given without Distinction to both Sexes. I must add, that they have some particular *Advantages* above us, that may serve to strengthen a Reproof from *them*; the Deference and Respect which, from a certain Complaisance of Nature, as well as Custom, is always paid them, contributing very much to qualify the Harshness, to fix the Impression, and forward the Success of such a Discipline. But however, if that won't do, I see nothing in it against the Modesty and Decency of their Sex if they *inform*. They can apply to a Justice of Peace for a Warrant, upon Occasions of personal Injury, as well as we, and no Body thinks it strange that they do so. Now why

P 3

shall

shall they not do as much for God's Honour as for *their own*? To promote *Religion* and *Virtue*, as to vindicate *themselves*? They are frequently called as Witnesses in public Courts of Justice, both in criminal and civil Cases, and no Body looks upon it as a Scandal for them to appear there. Why shall it be more a Scandal to give an Information to a Justice of Peace against Debauchery and Prophaneness? I must observe the Advantage also which they have in *this*, as well as in *reproving*: For if it happen that the Offender discovers who it was that informed, he may be *angry* indeed, but how will he revenge himself? All the World will laugh at him if he set his Wit to a *Woman*. Be that however as it will, the Sense of their Duty is to be always a stronger Argument with them than the Fear of any Body's Malice.

Well (said *Eulabes* laughing) to oblige you then, the Women shall have my Consent to inform, they will take some of the Odium off from *us*: But you would not have them *in our Society*, I hope.

Phil. No Sir; there's no Occasion for that; we shall leave them to the
In-

Instruction of their Husbands. But to go on now with the rest of those Directions which seem to be necessary to conduct this Affair with Prudence.

VIII. I can't say that we are bound in Conscience to inform of every individual Offence which even a *notorious* Swearer or Drunkard is guilty of. Perhaps, like *the Madman who casteth Firebrands, Arrows and Death*, we hear him insulting the Majesty of Heaven in Twenty or Thirty Oaths, or tearing to Pieces the Happiness of his Neighbour in as many Curses, at one Time; But 'tis adviseable, I think, in such a Case, to give an Information only of Four or Five of each, or more or fewer in Proportion, as Charity and Prudence shall direct. For I would have us observe a *Moderation* in this as well as other things, that there may be no just Room for the Cant of *Rigours* and *Extremities*. In like Manner, perhaps the Person whom I see drunk to Day, I may see again in the same Condition to Morrow, and again within a Day or Two after; but I won't inform of *all* these Offences, but of that which I can be surest of; and I will let him first be actually punished for

P 4

that,

that. (except the Magistrate or the Constable should wilfully neglect their Office,) before I take any farther Notice of him ; but the next Offence which I discover him guilty of *after* such Conviction and Punishment he must expect to be again presented for.

IX. As to informing of every particular *Offender*, I must add to what was said before, that whatever Distinctions may be allowed upon the *Quality of his Offence*, or upon his *moral Character*, we have none to make on Account of his *Estate* or *Circumstances*. In this we must be sure to be impartial ; to inform of a *rich* Man as well as a *poor* one, a *great* as well as a *meaner* Person. “ We are not to keep the Favour and Good-will of Gentlemen, by conniving at their Faults, when ’tis in our Power to have them punished : For what is an Offence against the Law of God and the Land in *one* Man, is so in *another* ; and the Punishment of one great Criminal might do more Good than that of Twenty meaner, as his Example and Influence did more Hurt. Beside, that it will please the ordinary People, and very much take off their Distast, and reconcile them to our Design, when they

Mr. Shower's
Serm. before
the Society, p.
45.

they see great Men, or their rich and wealthy Neighbours, whom they are naturally apt to envy, fare no better than themselves, but equally levell'd at for Reformation, and alike exposed to Punishment for their Vices. Yet if any Case should happen, wherein, as Matters now are, an Information and Punishment of such a Person should be *really* like to do more Harm than Good, (which will be considered when it comes to be proposed amongst us,) I think we may forbear.

Mr. Shower's
before the So-
ciety, p. 45.

X. In the next Place, we must set aside all Consideration of *Party* in this Affair. Prophaneness and Debauchery are criminal in those of one Party as well as of another, Protestants and Papists, Churchmen and Dissenters, Whigs and Tories, or any such Distinction whatsoever, and therefore ought to be suppressed alike in all.

Mr. Shower's
p. 42.

XI. Nor are we to forbear and conceal, purely because the Offender is our *Friend*, our *intimate Acquaintance* or *Relation*; nor inform, purely because he is our particular *Enemy*. In the first Case 'tis absurd, to forbear doing him a charitable Office, because we have a Kindness for him; and in the

Page 43.

the last, 'tis idle, to think to *revenge* our selves by reclaiming him from his Vices. I don't say, that therefore we must not *at all* inform of an Enemy: But we must not do it from a Principle of *Spleen* and *Passion*. We are to inform of Friends and Enemies alike, because Christianity binds us to do Good to all Men, and to provide for the Honour of God and Virtue, whoever it be that insults them.

XII. We should make it our special Care to carry to the World in general, and to our whole Neighbourhood, with such a constant Meekness, Humility, Tenderneſs, and Readineſs to do them all good Offices, and such an Inoffenſiveneneſs in all our Words and Actions, ſo far as is conſiſtent with our Duty, that Offenders may have Reaſon to believe we *do*, as we *profess*, deſign nothing but their Good, in bringing their Vices to due Punishment.

XIII. Let us not proceed too *raſhly* and *furiously* at firſt, as I have known ſome impetuous Tempers do, who by that Means have run themſelves out of Breath, and tired their Zeal in a very little time; and becauſe the Grace and Providence of God did not think
fit

fit to answer their hasty Expectations, by beating down Impiety and Debauchery at one Blow, have not only forbore to do any thing further, but even set themselves to discourage the persevering Zeal of others. Too much Heat is seldom lasting; it spends its self before any thing be done to Purpose. Such Zeal is *like the Morning-Cloud, and as the early Dew it passes away*; but let us run with **PATIENCE** *the Race that is set before us*; for that (as well as other Graces) ought to have *its perfect Work*; and in due Time we *shall reap if we faint not*. Whereas if we grow weary of well doing by such imprudent Heats, things will be much worse than if we had never begun; Vice will flow again with the Fury of a returning Tide, and having born down all our Attempts to correct and conquer it, will insult with greater Impudence. Therefore let us rather at first, lay some prudent Restraint upon our Zeal, and give it by degrees more Liberty afterwards: For Reformation is a *Work of Time*, and not to be begun and finished in an Instant, but will require a long and faithful Steadiness, Reserves of Courage for Trials unforeseen, Reserves of

H s. 6. 4.

Heb. 12. 1.

Jam. 1. 4.

Gal. 6. 9.

of Faith and Patience, and such a regular Warmth of Spirit as is *conducted by Judgment*, and argues *Strength and Vigour*, rather than such high Pulses as bespeak a *Fever*.

Mr. Chadwick's Sermon.
before the Society at Not.
p. 52.

XIV. We should also upon another Account beware of running into *Extremes*, that we may not overdo the Matter by being *too severe and inquisitive*; but making all due Allowances, for humane Frailty, Temptation, and other Circumstances.

Help to Ref.
5th Edit. p.
104.

XV. By no Means let us do any thing to *provoke* or *draw* Men into Sin, that we may take the Advantage to inform against them. This would be base and barbarous, unworthy of a Christian, especially one that talks of *reforming* People from their Vices, and indeed would bring a just Odium both upon us and our Undertaking.

XVI. Let us keep a strict Guard upon *our own Morals*, and be sure to be reformed our selves; for we cannot have our Eye more watchfully upon *others*, than others will have upon *us*; and if any thing scandalous, and even any visible *Irregularity*, tho' of smaller Moment, be discovered in us, (upon which Occasions Envy and Ill-nature are very quick-sighted,) we shall

shall be sure to hear of it, we shall bring a most effectual Discredit upon our Design, (at least, if we should at any time be guilty of any of those notorious Sins which we present to Punishment in others,) and cause the Enemies of God and Virtue to blaspheme.

XVII. In the next Place, we must always be very sure of the Fact before we inform: Report or Suspicion won't do, for we must make our Oath upon it, that *so it was*; and therefore where the Matter of Fact is any ways doubtful, we must forbear.

Help to Ref.
5th Edit. p.
103.

XVIII. Particularly we must use Caution in judging when a Man is *Drunk*; several Accidents may concur, without a Crime, to make him seem so when he is not. Yet he that cannot stand upon his Legs, or that reels and staggers as he goes along the Streets, and is heard to falter remarkably in his Speech, (especially if he be known by his Character to be a common Drunkard, and not known to have any natural Infirmary or Defect in his Tongue or Limbs,) may ordinarily be presumed to be drunk.

Ibid.

XIX. As to prophane Swearing and Cursing, 'tis fit we should remember

Ibid.

the

the *Words* of the Oath or Curse, that we may be able to repeat them if it be required.

Help to Ref.
5th Edit. p.
103.

XX. As to permitting Tippling, which, in Strictness of Law, is punishable upon *any* Day, 'tis thought adviseable to take Notice only of what is done *on the Lord's-Day*; except such Tippling at other Times be at very disorderly Hours, and in a very disorderly Manner.

Ibid.

XXI. As to the *Prophanation of the Lord's-Day*, by the Exercise of any Trade or ordinary Calling, we may inform against such as we see offending by the *weighing, measuring, bargaining* for, or *Delivery* of Goods, or *receiving Money* for them; as also against *Bakers* appearing in the Streets with their Baskets; or *Barbers* with their Pot, Bason, or Periwig-Box; *Shoemakers, Taylors, Hatters*, or other Tradesmen, carrying out their Work or Ware; and against all kinds of *manual* Labours, except in Cases of Necessity or Mercy.

Ibid. p. 104.

XXII. As to the *exposing Goods to Sale* on the Lord's-Day; if it be by those that *live* in Cellars, not to inform against them, unless they are seen to *sell* their Goods; because they have

have some Pretence for keeping open their Cellar-Doors or Windows, for the Benefit of Light or Air. But if any Wares, Fruit, &c. be exposed *without* or *above* such Doors or Windows, or in any *Shops* with the Windows open, or upon *Stalls*, tho' there be nothing seen to be sold, 'tis a sufficient Ground of Information.

XXIII. Our Informations (which it will be adviseable to set down in Writing) should be given to the Magistrate as soon as conveniently we can, that we may not be prevented by Business or Accident from giving them within the Time the Law allows in those Cases.

Help to Ref.
5th Edit. p.
104.

XXIV. And *Lastly*, in all our Applications to the Magistrate, we must behave our selves towards them with Deference and Respect.

Ibid.

Chor. Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for the Pains you have taken with us, and do assure you of my hearty Concurrence in this good Work.

Eul. I do the same, *Philaretus*, and I pray God to give us Faith and Courage, Zeal, and Prudence, and Success. We will meet you again
next

next Week, to settle our selves in a regular Society, and in the mean Time be thinking of some other proper Persons to propose it to. It grows late, and you will excuse us now if we be going.

Phil. Gentlemen, I thank God, if I have done Him, or you, any Service by this Evening's Work: As my Design is his Glory, I hope the Event will answer, let us at least have the Satisfaction of *doing our Endeavours*; let us hope and pray for his Direction and his Blessing here, and keep our Eye fixed upon the glorious Reward hereafter.

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by particular notice, and invitation, that it is not
a library that is intended, but the review of the
evils from the Expedition; and by these means
may have imposed upon certain well meaning
people: This is therefore to declare to the world
that such a change upon the society for the
time of the year is absolutely false. It must be
known, there have been some bad and wicked
persons (not engaged, or in the least connected with
this Society) who have carried away from
Officers and members from their men; but
all fact and evidence are wholly denied by the
Society, who have carried away from the
truth, which they have discovered in the
know or believe that any engaged in Society are
capable of such a thing. (They are good and
on of action from a mercenary principle, they have
always acted as a man is allowed to be honest by
the laws) However, it is a great pity that
should happen, but any person who is
ed in any of the Society for the year of the
should be guilty of any such evil practice, the
Society will cheerfully receive any
good to those who for the public good
make discovery thereof.



Disney, John

A second essay upon the execution of the laws against immorality and prophaneness wherein the case of giving informations to the magistrate is considered, and objections against it answered

London 1710

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